[illegible]
OR,
CONSOLATION
FOR
Weak BELEEVERS.

A

Treatise, discoursing of the *Sweetness of Christs Carriage towards all his Weak Members.*

Particularly, to such as are weak, either
1. *Habitually*; or
2. *Accidentally*, by reason of
   1. *Working*.
   2. *Sinning*; or
   3. *Suffering*.

Being the summ of certain Sermons preached upon *Isa.* 40. 11.

By *John Durant*, Preacher of the Gospel.

The third Edition corrected and amended.

יִפְרִיו מָתוֹק לְחֵכִי

i.e. *His fruit was sweet to my taste*. Cant. 2. 3.

וְכֻלּוֹ מַחֲמַנִּים

i.e. *All of him is desirable*, Cant. 5. 16.

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TO THE
Candid and Christian
READER.

THou art here presented with some Sips of Christ streaming through a poor creature. If thou espyest any puddle in them (as sure thou mayest) its by reason of the polluted breast, through which they came; for the fountain was clear. Its our misery, that pure flowings forth from Christ, become impure in their passage through us: As the water, which in its fountain was as clear as Christal, becomes muddy in its course through some chanel. I wish I were sensible enough of what a filthy chanel my

heart is. Sure I am, if there bee any clearness *or* comfort *in what is offered, its not mine, but* Christ's.

'Twas a rainy day in which those thoughts were brought forth. My own heart needed some refreshing; and Christs spirit brought that Text to my hands, which is treated on in this Discourse. Concerning which, I have this to say.

If thou expect strong meat, *'tis not here: All that I pretend to (and oh that I may attain that!) is to give* Milk to Babes. *If free grace have dignified mee with that* worthy name [Beleever] *I must adde to it this Epithite* [weak] *Being such, I so spake: And (as our Proverb is)* I measured others Corn by my own Bushel. *I thought some might bee as I was, and am,* weak: *And if thou art* strong, *I have nothing to say to thee but this;* Be not high minded, but fear: *Even the* men *in Christ, sometimes are as the* children, *weak.*

But

But if thou be either habitually *or accidentally weak: here is a* Sip *for thee, I promise no more. Neither wilt thou finde so much, if Christ do not undertake (which I have desired, and do) to make my promise good.*

That which incouraged mee to appear in Print, *was this, hope, that as Christ had made this, some way, sweet in the* Pulpit, *so hee would also make it in the* Press. *Some* Lambs *of Christ were refreshed in the* preaching *of this: and that made mee hope, that some others might also be refreshed by its* perusal. *I must proclaim it to the glory of free grace, that my own soul hath tasted some sweetnesse by what Christ gave in to mee in this Treatise: And because I would not* eat my morsels alone, *I was the willinger to this work of publishing.*

If I might be a meanes to give a Sip of consolation *to some* weak Beleever, *I have my reward in this, and incouragement to the like.*

'tis Christs peculiar Prerogative *(and therefore* Paul *and* Timothy *would not pretend unto it)* to have dominion over faith: *'Tis hard enough for any (too much for mee) to be counted helping of his peoples joy. I have always feared that* Kingly evil, *which I see* swell *under the throats of some, while they rather* Magisterially *presse things upon peoples consciences, than* Ministerially *help Beleevers comforts. To this last I have aimed, and if I obtain it not, I confesse I have missed my mark.*

I have studied to be above offences; *therefore I shall not print* complaints, *otherwise I might sigh and say, that I know what* David *meant, when hee said,* his soul was among Lions, &c. *Psal.* 57. 4. *Some have been so* weak *as to* deny, *others worse, to endeavour to* disgrace *my* Ministry: *But Christ (whom I blesse,* who inabled mee, for that he counted mee faithful, putting mee

into

into the Ministry) *hath sweetened my endeavours, by causing some of his sheep* (who know his voice) *to owne my Ministry, and vindicate mee from being a* stranger. *It is my humble hope, that if thou be a* Lamb of Christ, *thou wilt in this* (though through an Oaten Reed) hear his voice; *which* (if thou do) *follow it.*

When I shall understand, that what is now printed, either pleases, or profits any poor beleeving soul, I shall be encouraged to publish something besides, of the like nature to this, viz. The sweetnes of Christs carriage to Beleevers under temptations: *And also the* tenderness of his heart towards Beleevers, with reference to their ignorance, unbeleef, and inability to act.

At present I have done, when I have intreated thee (*Reader*) *to pray for mee, that I may finde* grace *to be* faithful, *and* wisdome *to bee* skilful *in feeding the* Lambs *of Christ*,

the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made mee overſeer; *That in the day of my Maſters coming, I may be able to give up my account with comfort.*

If thou in this be my Remembrancer *to the* Throne of Grace, *thou wilt do an* office of charity *for, and lay an* obligation *of* ſervice *upon him, who is,*

Reader,

The meaneſt of the

Servants of Chriſt,

John Durant.

Sips

Sips of Sweetneſſe;

OR,

Conſolation for Weak Believers.

Sect. I.

Declaring Chriſts ſweet Carriage to all his weak Members.

Iſaiah 40. 11.

He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepheard; he ſhall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his boſome: he ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction to the Text, with the drift and ſcope of the words.

IT hath ſtill been the deſign of the *enemy of our Salvation*, Satan, to keep ſoules from cloſing with the Author and *Captain of our Salvation*, Jeſus Chriſt. Heb. 2. 10. Τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας.

Christ. Now for the advancement of this his design, hee doth still indeavour (amongst other his *wiles*) to raise and nourish in the hearts and minds of poor souls very hard thoughts of Jesus Christ. If Satan cannot keep souls in *slavery* (as hee doth the *Indians*) by representing himself to them as *terrible*, hee will (if possible) keep them from entring into Christs *service*, by perswading them that hee is not *merciful*. Indeed it is the Devils main *design*, to detain a poor soul alway under his own *yoak*; and to this end hee would fain delude the soul, by making it beleeve 'tis all *golden*; but if hee miss in this, his next method is, to dis-swade the soul from taking up Christs *yoak*; and therefore hee endeavours to deceive, by pressing the soul that 'tis all *Iron*: and if a soul desert him, and will serve Christ, he must look (so the Serpent insinuates) to meet with *hard imployment*, and a *harsh Master*, in whose service hee must expect *many sorrows*, but few *joyes*, great *work*, and little *wages*.

Eph. 6. 11. μεθοδείας.

But in all this Satan acts like himself, a *liar*, and speaks of himself,

lyes,

ges. For ſurely never did poor ſoul give up its name (and with that its heart) to the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, but found both in the Maſter and the Service incomparable ſweetneſſe. 'Twas but a ſlanderous and *ſlender excuſe* of him in the Parable, that ſaid, he knew Chriſt was an *auſtere Maſter*. The faithful Servants found Chriſts bounty, *fully* confuting that ſlander. Indeed Chriſt is a *Lion*, and ſo knows how to bee angry, and *tear in peeces* ſuch as forget him, and themſelves, and forſake their own mercies, by hearkning to lying vanities, preferring Satans ſlavery, before his ſervice. But Jeſus is alſo a *Lambe* (and ſo fitted to bee kinde) and hee knows how to follow ſuch poor ſouls with *embraſes* of love, as love themſelves by loving him; and cleaving to him, forſake all things elſe. True it is, Chriſt is *great*, and if ſinners ſtubbornly ſtand out, they ſhall feel that hee is *ſevere*; but withall hee is *good*: and if ſouls ſincerely come to him, they ſhall taſte that hee is ſweet. Indeed the Lord Jeſus is a *flame of fire*, to conſume thoſe that obſtinately refuſe to hearken to the

Luk. 19. 22. ἀν. Θεω-πος ἀυ-ϛηρος.

the *Goſpel*: but with all hee is a *Sea of love* to comfort all thoſe that cordially obey it, by *taking him*. However *Goats* out of his fold ſhall finde him *dreadful*; poor *Lambs* within the fold both do, and ſhall finde him *merciful*. This is that which this great Prophet in this place propheſieth concerning Jeſus Chriſt. Where ſpeaking of *Chriſts carriage* towards all his members, hee ſaith that, before time, which beleevers ſeal to in time, *viz.* That *never did any ſoul, which received Chriſt as tendred in the Goſpel, miſcarry either through want or weakneſs: For* Chriſt *ſtill fed and carried it*, &c. This I conceive to be the ſcope of this Prophetical ſpeech concerning Chriſt: namely, That *his carriage ſhould bee full of ſweetneſſe towards all his members, eſpecially ſuch of them as are weaker than the reſt*,

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Context, with the Diviſion of the words, and the Doctrines ariſing from them.

IN the beginning of the Chapter, the *Prophet* brings in God, commanding to *preach comfort* to his people. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith your God.* It's *Gods mercy* that hee hath provided; and *Miniſters* duty they ſhould preach comfort to the godly. The coherence and dependance of the Text

Being commanded to preach comfortably, he brings in the *Baptiſt*, uſhering in of *Chriſt*; verſ. 3. *If comfort be to be preached, Chriſt is to be the Text.*

Speaking of Chriſt, hee preſents him coming with a *ſtrong hand*, verſ. 10. Indeed *ſuch a Saviour doth the ſoul need, who hath a ſtrong hand, able to reſcue the poor Lamb, out of the mouth of the devouring Lion.* And that Chriſt might be ſeen to be a *ſuitable* and *ſweet Saviour*, the Prophet adds; that as hee was *powerful, and ſo able* to reſcue the poor ſinner: in like manner hee was *merciful*, and ſo *willing* to feed the ſoul when it *hungered*, and to *gather* it in caſe

caſe it *wandred*, and in caſe of *weakneſſe*, to carry it in his boſome. So that in theſe words Chriſt is held out, under the ſimilitude of a *Shepherd*, carrying himſelf in all things as a *Faithful*, and *merciful Shepherd to poor ſouls*. In general, 'tis ſaid, hee ſhould *feed his flock*; and anſwerable to particular neceſſity of the weak of the flock, hee is alſo particularly deſcribed to be *careful*: As in caſe the ſoul *wander* (as ſometimes the beſt ſheep do) it is ſaid, hee ſhall *gather* it, the word is, קבץ: which ſignifies a *careful gathering*, and therefore ſo uſed, *Gen.* 41. 48. *Joſeph* was not more careful in gathering up the food of the ſeven years, than *Jeſus* is in gathering wandring beleevers. And in caſe of *weakneſs* (as Lambs will bee) Chriſt is ſaid to *carry* them: the word is, נשׂא from נשׂא which is not onely to *carry*, but to *take up*, (as ſuppoſing they may bee fain) and *carry*. And laſtly, in caſe of *breeding*, or being with young. It is propheſied of Chriſt, that hee would *lead* them. Yea, and that all theſe acts of Chriſt might be ſet out in their full *ſweetneſs*;

every

every one of them is heightened by its manner of performance. Hee will *gather* the wandring with *his arm*, and carry the weakling *in his boſome*, and lead the breeding *gently in his hand*, for ſo the word יְנַהֵל ſignifies, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter. So that now the words holding out *Chriſt's ſweet carriage towards his members*, do eaſily divide themſelves into theſe particulars,

1. The *General carriage* of Chriſt towards all his, he *ſhall feed them.*
2. The *ſpecial carriage* of Chriſt towards the *weak*; held out in the

Diviſion of the words.

1. *Subſtance*, which (as the *golden Apples*) is ſet down in three particulars.
   1. For the *wanderers*; he will *gather* them.
   2. For the *weak ones*, the *Lambs*, hee will *carry them*. And
   3. For the *Ews* (as I may ſo ſay) he will lead them.
2. *Circumſtance*, which ſets out the *golden Apples in pictures of ſilver.* Hee will do all theſe in a *ſweet* and *ſafe* way, gather with his *arm*, carry in his *boſome*, and lead (*Jacob*-like) very *gently*, thoſe *that are with young.*

I might obſerve divers Doctrines from theſe words; As,

1. *Jeſus Chriſt is the great Shepherd of the ſouls of all Gods Elect.*

1 Pet. 2. 25 ἐπὶ τ ποιμένα. 2. *As God the Father hath made Chriſt chief Shepherd of our ſouls; ſo hee did, doth, and will diſcharge his truſt carefully, faithfully, and tenderly.*

3. *There are diverſities of forms in Chriſts fold: ſome are Lambs, weak; ſome Ewes big with young.*

4. *Jeſus Chriſt carrieth himſelf in a ſuitable way to all the ſouls that bee in his flock.*

Theſe, and many ſuch I might note, but I paſs them, as not aiming at any thing in this Diſcourſe from this place, but onely the *carriage of Chriſt*, as it is deſcribed with reference to his *weak ones.*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The main Doctrine propounded and opened.

THe chief thing which I aim at, being the comfort of weak Saints, in observing the *carriage* of Christ towards such: I shall hold it out in this Doctrine.

Jesus Christ carries himself very sweetly and tenderly, as toward all his members, so towards his weak members especially. Or, The Doctrine.

Christs carriage is specially sweet and tender towards every poor weak beleever.

I suppose it lies fully and clear in this place, as I shall shew hereafter. For the opening of this Doctrine, it being a *Theologicall proposition*, I shall first explain the *subject*, and then the *predicate* thereof. Explication.

1 The *subject* of the Doctrine, and discourse, is the *carriage of Christ*. And this is nothing else, but the way, or manner of *Christs manifesting of himself through sundry and various dispensations towards the souls of his.* What Christs carriage is.

2 The *predicate*, or the thing

which we affirm of this demeanour of Christ, is, that *it is sweet and tender*; now although the full meaning of these words, as they relate to Christs carriage, cannot be sufficiently expressed, (which is its glory) yet I shall offer what I intend in two steps.

1 Negatively, *Christ doth not carry himself in harsh, sowr, severe manner, as some do*: Indeed the wicked servant said, that hee, Christ, was an austere man (the Syriac signifies a *hard man*) But however he said, those that have tasted Christs carriage, can confute this slander. None of his have any just ground to complain of Christ, as hee in the Poet of a self-conceited, servant-despising-Master. However *Nabals* carriage gave just occasion to his servants complaint, that hee was such a son of *Belial*, that they *knew not how to speak to him*, as it is, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. Christs carriage was never such. He forbids his under-shepherds *severe-lording* over his flock, and he (who is the chief Shepherd) abhors that, which he forbade them. Beleeve it (Christian) Christs carriage was not, is not crabbed.

Aristophanes. ὡς ἀργαλέον πραγμ' ἐστιν, Δῆλον γενέσθι παραφρονοῦντος δεσπότου. Μηδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες, 1 Pet. 5. 3.

2 Po-

2 Positively, *Jesus Christ demeans himself softly, sweetly towards his. In every manifestation hee discovers himself meek, and milde.* He speaks so, as if his design were (as it is) to tye the hearts of his hearers to his lips with *silken threads*, (as it is fancied of the *French-Hercules*) he acts so, as one that makes good *Platoes* councel, *i. e.* to tye his servants by love-necessities to his service. In this *Titus* (if the Historian do not hyperbolize) was a type of Christ, who carried himself so, as that none ever went sad from him. As he came to *Jerusalem meekly*, so hee carries himself towards his members still; *Love is his name, and love is with him*; it is *his nature*, as well as *his name*. This all the members of Christ can seal to, as a sure experienced truth; but especially such of them, as are, or have been *weak*. And this I am to prove. All the servants of Christ can *witness* for their Master. All *his Epithites speak* him *sweet*. *Lamb is* a name of *love*; *Husbands* carriages are (or should be) *sweet*, and tender. However they (as men) may forget themselves: Christ (as God) *is unchangeable.*

ἐρωτικᾶς τε ἀνάγκαις

Proof of the Doctrine.

Exo. 19. 4 *able.* He *bore* his people of old, as on *Eagles wings.* And of late, and ſtill, in his own *armes.* Indeed he commanded the *Angels*, to bear his people in Pſa. 81. 11 their *armes*, but (as if they were not 12. ſoft enough) he takes them into his own. *He bears* their *ſins* on *his back*, and their *ſouls in his boſome.* If the ſoul *walk abroad*, *Chriſt walks with it*, and carries himſelf kinde. All the Cant. 3. 10 way ſhal be *paved with love* under their feet, that it may bee ſoft; and over their head hee will ſpread a *banner of* Cant. 2. 4 *love*, that they may be ſafe: If the ſoul bee *ſick*, and muſt *lye down*, hee *will* Pſal. 40. 1 *make the bed*, and ſit by; and that hee may ſhew himſelf tender and ſweet, he will *put one hand over*, and the *other* Cant. 2. 6 *hand under.* But what need I hold up a *candle* to let you ſee the *Sun*? God the Father undertook for him, *Hee ſhould* Iſa. 42. 2, 3 *not cry, nor lift up*, &c. *i. e.* (not to exclude other ſenſes) he ſhould not be *lofty and majeſtical, but lowly, meek, and merciful. Bruiſed reeds*, and *ſmoaking flaxes*, i.e. weak and feeble ſouls, *ſhould not be broken nor quenched by him*, i. e. they ſhould tenderly and gently bee dealt withall; in a *ſweet way* (anſwera-

ble

ble to their weak condition) ſhould they finde his *carriage*, Search (ſoul) the *Annals* of his life: See, did not all his *actings* towards weak ones, ſpeak *love*? Inquire of thoſe with whom hee did converſe, this will teſtify to this truth, concerning his *carriage*, that hee was indeed very *tender* and *ſweet* to all, but eſpecially ſo, to ſuch ſouls as were *feeble*. All the flock, but eſpecially the *weak* of the flock, found him a ſurpaſſing, careful, kind Shepherd, in all his carriage.

Chap. IV.

A more full explication of the point, and a general demonſtration of the truth thereof.

BEcauſe the Text chiefly (in my eye) carries out the *ſweetneſs* of Chriſt towards *weak* beleevers; and as I ſaid, this was my ſole deſign in the diſcourſe, to hold out comfort for ſuch (as being indeed moſt ſuitable to my own ſtate) I ſhall therefore more *amply open* the point, and illuſtrate it in three particulars, *viz.* by ſhewing: The point amplified.

1 *Who theſe weak ones are.*
2 *Wherein the ſweetneſs and tenderneſs of Chriſt's carriage to them doth appear.*
3 *Why Chriſt doth carry himſelf in ſuch a way, eſpecially towards them.*

Who are weak.

Firſt, That it may be known who theſe *weak believers* are (with reference to whom this Tract is chiefly penned) you may be pleaſed thus to diſtinguiſh of weak beleevers.

1 Some there are, who are *habitually weak.*
2 Others there are, *accidentally weak.*

Habitually weak.

Of thoſe that are *habitually weak*, I ſhall ſpeak under this firſt general Doctrine, and ſpeak to the other, particularly by themſelves, and that alſo, out of this Text.

Now I call ſuch ſouls *habitually weak*, who by reaſon of their *age in Chriſt*, or the form and rank in his *School*, have not attained to any great ſtrength in Chriſt, or any full meaſure of the graces of the *Spirit*. In whom, the life, and *habits of grace* (which I humbly conceive might in more

more apt phrase be called, the *breathings*, or *fruits of the Spirit*) are but yet, in a *low*, *feeble*, *scanty measure*, or degree. And these I suppose may be reduced to two heads, for illustrations sake.

1 *Beginners*, or *undergraduates in Christs School*: *Grace* at first being but *little*, (and therefore compared to the least of grains, *mustard-seed*.) And *Saints* at first being but *feeble*, (and in that respect likened to the feeblest of creatures, *Lambs*.) These are the first rank of weak persons, whom I call *beginners* (who yet are in a capacity of more strength, as they prove in time proficients in the School of Christ, but) for present are but weak, as all *beginners* are.

2 *Babes* in Christs house, (called in the Text, Lambs in Christs fold) such as were so a *long time*; as those 1 *Cor*. 3. 1. Or *alway*, as some are, 1 *John* 2. 12, 13. for it is in Christs house, as in yours, many that are *born there*, live not beyond the *age* of *babes* and children, but dye (as it were) in their *infancy*; who albeit they attain to the measure appointed them, yet

Psal. 87. 5. וְהֵילֵד שָׁם

εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας. they come not up to the meaſure of a *full age* in Chriſt, as the word ſignifies, *Eph.* 4. 13. But as *babes*, die, having indeed the *truth* of *life*, and the *divine nature*, and ſo the *breathings*, or fruits of the *Spirit*, yet (infant-like) in a very *feeble degree*, all their daies.

Under theſe heads, I think all may not unfitly be conſidered, whom I call *habitually weak*, to diſtinguiſh them from others, who are *accidentally* ſo: of which hereafter.

Now both theſe ranks are weak in a threefold reſpect.

Som weak in reſpect of life.

First, in *reſpect of life*; in whom indeed the *Spirit breaths* but *faintly*, whoſe *pulſe* beats but *feebly*, whoſe heart *pants* but *weakly*, in whom the very *principles of Religion* are laid, indeed *ſure* (being upon the *foundation Chriſt*) but yet the *practice of Religion* (which is as the ſuperſtructure of that foundation) is not *high*, nor *ſublime*; whoſe *ſouls* are *alive*, but whoſe *actions* are not *lively*; who pray, and read, and hear, &c. from a *true internal principle*, or power of *ſpiritual life*; but yet ſo, as it plainly appears to them (yea, and to others) that they

they are rather the *pantings*, *liſpings*, *eſſays* of *beginners*, and *babes*, than the performances of *graduates* and men in Chriſt Jeſus.

Secondly, in *reſpect of light*; for *there is not in every believer the ſame knowledge*, i. e. not the ſame meaſure of knowledge, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. Indeed the *Sun of wiſdom* (Chriſt *the wiſdom of God*) ſhines in them, but through many *clouds*, very *dimly*. In them there is the *knowledge of the Alphabet*, that Chriſt is the firſt letter, *Alpha*, and the laſt, *Omega*. They underſtand the *rudiments of Religion*, and ſome main *axioms*, or concluſions; they are able to read, and hear, to interpret, and underſtand ſome plain, and neceſſary places, and truths; but yet ſo, as that they can rather *apprehend*, than hold out divine *truths*, and can better *dye*, than *diſpute* for Chriſt, ſo as that they are ſtil rather *lovers of knowledge*, than maſters; whom you may call *learners*, but not *learned*, and to whom the *line* of the *Goſpel* is come, but not in a *meaſure ſtretched out* (that I may allude to that, *Pſal.* 19 and 2 *Cor.* 10. 13, 14. and *Rom.* 10. 18.) ſouls who in truth are *Scholars*, but not *Doctors*

Some there be, who are weak in reſpect of knowledge

Eraſmus's

Heb. 5. 12. *Doctors* in Chriſts School, who know rather how to *learn* themſelves, than how to *teach* others.

Thirdly, in *reſpect of faith*; for there are ſome true beleevers, and yet *weak in faith*, Rom. 14. 1. Indeed they do *receive Chriſt*, and *free grace*, but it is with a *ſhaking hand*. They have (as Divines ſay) the *faith of adherence*, they will ſtick to *Chriſt as theirs*, but they want the *faith of evidence*, they cannot ſee *themſelves as his*. They are beleevers but of *little faith*. They will truſt, though hee *kill* them: but they do not know *fully* that he will *ſave* them. They hope that Chriſt will not *caſt them off*, but are not ſure that hee will *take them up*. They would beleeve that Chriſt will not *reject them*, becauſe he commands others to *receive them*, Rom 14. 1. but cannot conclude that Chriſt will imbrace them. Beleevers you may call them, and indeed they are *Abrahams children*, but yet they are but *Babes*, not (as their Father was) *ſtrong in faith*, Rom. 4. 20. Indeed *Abraham* (their father) was not, (but they as children) are *weak* in faith, as it is, *Rom.* 4. 19.

Some ſouls weak in faith.

ἀλιγόπιστοι Mat. 16.

Thus

Thus you see the first thing, who they are that I call *weak members* of Jesus Christ.

For the second head: *wherein doth the carriage of Christ appear to be sweet and tender towards these.* I shall (if God will) in a particular Tract shew it, with reference to each of these sorts, by declaring that Christ [*is*] *sweet*, and [*how*] to those whose *life*, and *light*, and *faith*, is but *weak and little*; onely from this Text, I shall hold it out in a general way, how *Christs carriage* is tender towards all these, and such as are thus, for (at least) distinction sake, *habitually weak*, whom the Prophet calls his *Lambs*, in this place. Demonstrations of the truth of the Doctrine from the Text.

Now this appears from the Text, in two things.

1 *He will gather them*, and that with his *arm*.
2 *He will carry them*, and that in his *bosome*.

First, *Christ carries himself very tenderly towards his weak Lambs, in that he will gather them. Lambs*, all the flock are but *weak*, and so apt to *wander*, if not looked to. Now Christ hee will

gather

gather, and that with much care (for ſo the word ſignifies) his poor *weak* members, that are apt to *wander*. Chriſt thou (*poor weakling*) will carefully look to thee. That thou mayeſt *not wander*, (at leaſt too far) he will *make bare*, and *ſtretch out* his *arm* to *gather* thee. The poor ſoul ſaith, *I am weak*; and which is worſe, *I am wicked*; I have a *ſtraggling heart*, I ſhall go *aſtray like a loſt ſheep*; will Chriſt ſeek me? Yes *poor ſoul*, he hath a *tender heart*, and he will *ſeek* thee carefully, and he hath a *long arm*, he will *gather* thee ſurely. Thou doſt not *forget* him, (as *David* intimates) and hee doth not *forget thee*, nor *himſelf*. He is thy *ſoul-ſhepherd*, he will therefore gather thee, O thou *weakling* of his flock!

Pſal. 119. 176.

Secondly, *Chriſts carriage is very tender, for he will carry thoſe that cannot go.* The *weak Lamb* lies down, it cannot go; the *Shepherd* takes it up, and *bears* it. The *weak beleever* cannot walk with Chriſt: now Chriſt will *ſtoop down*, and take it up, and *carry* it, ſo the word ſignifies. Oh, ſaith the *weak* ſoul, I would follow *Chriſt*, but I cannot: I would *walk with him* hand

in

in hand, but *I* am weak. Well *beleever*, thou art *weak*, and Christ is *kinde*; thou *liest along*, and he will take *thee up*; thou canst not go, hee will *carry thee*. Oh but how? will he put mee on his back, expose me to wind and weather? No *poor soul*, hee will *carry thee in his bosome*, and keep thee warm and safe there. True, hee will lay thy sins upon his back, and *bear* all the *lashes* of his Fathers wrath for thy *wickednesse*; but he will *carry* thy soul (*O beleever*) *in his bosome*, and cherish thee there with the warmth of his *love*, because of thy *weaknesse*.

Dear soul! I hint things but briefly, that I be not burthensome; read the Prophet, think of what is said; tell me, doth not Christ *carry himself tenderly*, and *sweetly, towards weak beleevers, in gathering them with his arm, and carrying them in his bosome?*

CHAP

Chap. V.

Six particulars further ſetting out Chriſts tender carriage towards his weak members.

HAving in a general way hinted the ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage towards his weak members, as 'tis held out in this Text by the Prophet, I ſhall now indeavour, in a more particular manner, to acquaint you how ſweetly and tenderly Chriſt carries himſelf to weak beleevers, and,

1 *The ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage appears in this; that he is ready to entertain any poor ſoul* (though never ſo *weak*) *that comes unto him*; he ſtands with *open armes*, yea, and heart alſo, to give thoſe, *ſweet embraces*, that deſire to *embrace* him; he *proclaims* it, that he would *not caſt off*, or *out*, in any wiſe, any that *come* to him. Though the *approaches* of the ſoul to him be in much *weakneſs*, yet he accepts of the approach, and *embraces* the ſoul with much tenderneſs. Never did any that *came to him*, finde him *harſh*. If their comming were *but ſincere*, his entertainment was al-

ε μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω Joh. 6. 37

alway *sweet*. Thou *poor soul*! who hast a *desire to come* to Christ, because thou seest thou shalt *perish* without him, and yet dost *doubt* whether thou shalt be *entertained* by Christ, because thou findest thy self (as thou thinkest) unfitting for him: why, go and try, Taste, and thou shalt see that Christ is sweet and tender; he will not *cast thee off*, if thou wilt *come* to him. His invitation is general, *If any thirst, let him come to me, and* (not doubt, but) *drink*. Ask blinde *Bartimeus*, who sate by the *high way begging*, when Christ went by, and he will tell thee, though men were *harsh*, and bid him hold his peace, and would not let him *cry* to Christ, yet Jesus was *sweet*, and not only let him *cry*, but bid him *come* to him. Thou *weak believer*, that sayest, I would *go* Christ, but I *doubt* whether hee will *embrace* me being *blinde*: Arise and go, and thou shalt finde the Lord Jesus tender, and ready to entertain thee *sweetly*, yea, and so far from *rejecting* thee, for thy *blindness*, that he will receive thee to give thee sight. One would have thought, that if ever Christ would re-

Mark 10. 6, 48, 49.

ject

John 3. juſt any, he would have ſurely *rejected Nicodemus*, who was ſo *weak*, as being either *afraid*, or *aſhamed*, (for both) to own Chriſt in the *day*, he comes to him in the *night*. What might (as one would think) Chriſt have ſaid; *Nicodemus, is thy deſire* after me ſo *faint*, as that thou feareſt to come to meet in the *day time*? or *am I ſo unworthy*, as I am not to be owned but *out of ſight*? Haſt thou either ſo *low* an *eſteem* of me, or beareſt thou *ſo little love* to me, as that thou commeſt thus now in the *night*? Go, return as thou cameſt, I will not *accept* thee in the *dark*, who wouldeſt not *acknowledge* me in the *light*. I will not *entertain* thee in the *night*, who wouldeſt not *imbrace* me in the *day*. No, no, Chriſt hath not a ſyllable of theſe ſad ſayings; but preſently (knowing him to bee but a *beginner* in *ſpiritual*, though a Dr. in *literal* Iſrael) he *entertains* him, *imbraceth* him, *inſtructs* him, gives him leave to reply to what hee ſpake: bears with all the *ignorance* and *abſurdities* that were in his queſtions; ſtoops *low* to his capacity, that he might *lift him* high in *Spirit*: And in all things carries

carries himself as a *sweet, tender-hearted shepherd*, to a poor, *weak*, faint-hearted *Lamb*.

Secondly, The carriage of Christ is discovered to bee tenderly sweet to weak believers, in that *he cherisheth and preserveth those little buddings of grace that are in them*. Oh! saith the weak believer, my *fire* is so little (such a *little spark* in so many *ashes*) that I feat it will *out*. My *candle* gives so *little* light (and burns so weakly in such mighty winds;) that I doubt I shall be in the dark: My *Pulse* beats so *faintly* (there is such *little vital strength* under so many *mortal* sinnes) that I think I shall ere long *give up the ghost* and die. But fay *weak* souls! why fay ye thus? Christ is *sweet* and *tender*, what he hath begun, he will preserve. Thy *spark* of fire shall not be *extinguished*, thy *dim light* shall not bee *blown out*; thy *weak* life shall not *decay*. No, no, Christ wil preserve, maintain, cherish these true, though *weak*, beginnings of grace that are in thee. It was the Priests office to keep the *fire* in the *Sanctuary* from going out. And it is Christs work to do the same in thy

ſoul. Chriſt is this *Prieſt*, and that *ſpiritual ſpark of fire*, which God from above hath laid upon thy heart (the *altar*) in the *Sanctuary* of thy ſoul, he will look to, that it go not out. Though thou be *fearful*, remember Chriſt is *faithful*; he will be tender of thee, and thou ſhalt finde his carriage *ſweet*, in *cheriſhing thoſe weak graces that are in thee*. Maries *faith* was very
John 20. *feeble*, and when ſhe was ſeeking *ſorrowfully* her Lord in the garden, her faith was like to fire that is going out; yet ſhe ſeems to *doubt* whether *Chriſt* were *God*, and able to raiſe himſelf, and ſpeaks as if he were but *Man*, and
Ver. 13. that ſome had *ſtolen him away*. Sir (ſaid ſhe) if thou haſt *born him hence* (as if Chriſt could not go without carrying) *tell me where thou haſt laid*
Ver. 15. *him*, and *I will take him away*, (as if ſhe were ſtronger than he;) *Maries* faith you ſee is weak: ſurely this *ſpark* will out, if not preſently *blown*: why mark now, Chriſt diſcovers himſelf to be *ſweet* and *tender*, and therefore that he might *cheriſh* her faith in him he ſpeaks to her, *Mary*. The like carriage you ſee in *Luke* 24. towards

thoſe

those *weak* Disciples, who discourse doubtingly concerning his *Deity*, and begin to speak, as if they questioned whether he were the *Messias*, the Redeemer, yea or no. Their *faith* began to *stag* (said they) *ver.* 21. *We trusted it had been he, that should have redeemed* Israel; *and besides all this, to day is the third day since these things, ver.* 20. *were done.* *Weak hearts*, three days delay makes them distrust; surely their faith is almost out. But mark, how sweetly Christ speaks (indeed *ver.* 25. he checks their doubting, as arguing *folly*; and though their heart was sincere, he intimates 'twas but *slow* to *believe*, &c. yet) he cherisheth & preserveth their faith from dying; and carries himself very tenderly, in arguing from *Moses* and the *Prophets*, to keep their faith alive. That place in the Prophet discovers Christ as sweetly careful to preserve the least *buds* of *grace* in his, *Esa.* 65. 8. *Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for my servants sake.* How ever some seem to carry the meaning of this place, as

See v. 26 27.

Calvin in locum.

if it related to Gods ſparing and preſerving the righteous, while hee is puniſhing the wicked; yet I think, we are rather to underſtand it, as relating to the tenderneſs of Gods carriage, for Chriſts ſake, to elect *Iſrael*. God found them indeed weak; Rather as having wine in them *potentially*, then as being wine *actually*, as the *wine* in the *cluſter*, i. e. they had ſome few faint buddings of grace: And Chriſt ſaid (for hee was that *One*) "*Do not* "*deſtroy it Father, there is a bleſſing in* "*it, though it be yet weak, it will in time* "*be ſtrong: cheriſh it, preſerve it, there* "*is a bleſſing in it.* You ſee Chriſt is very tender over his weak members. He is careful to preſerve their bloſſomes, their buds. *Take us the Foxes,* Cant. 2. 15 *the little Foxes, that ſpoyl the vines, for the vines have tender grapes,* Cant. 2. 15. Chriſt will have a *tender care* of cheriſhing the *tender graces*, that he ſees in weak beleevers.

But thirdly, Chriſt diſcovers a ſweet carriage, not only in preſerving the weak beginnings of grace, in the hearts of beleevers, but alſo in *ſtrengthening their weakneſs every day.*

It

It is noteworthy, that Christ doth not onely *not break the bruised reeds*, nor *quench the smoaking flaxes*, i.e. cherish the faint graces which are in feeble Saints, but he strengthens & increases them; he makes an augmentation, *brings forth judgement unto truth*. Esa. 42. 3. The meaning is (saith Dr. *Sibs* sweetly) *That the gracious frame of holiness, set up in our hearts by the Spirit of Christ, shall go forward, or increase, till all contrary power be brought down*. My feet (saith the poor soul) are so *feeble*, that I am ready to *stumble* at every *straw*. Sure, I shall never be able to *stride* over a *log*, to go over a *mountain*. Doubt not, *O thou of little faith*. Christ will carry himself tender towards thee; & though thy feet be now weak as *Lambs* feet, that thou art scarce able to go over a *mole-hill*, without sliding, he will make them strong as *Hindes* feet, that thou shalt be able (ere long) to leap over a *mountain*. *He maketh my feet like hindes feet*, saith *David*, Psal. 18. 33. Christ is very careful to carry on the soul from *strength to strength*, Psal. 84. 7. He therefore *gave* some *Apostles*, some *Pro-*

Prophets, &c. That they might be for the *perfecting of the Saints*, that weak beleevers, who are but *Infants*, may grow *stronger* and *stronger*, till they come to *mans* age, as 'tis, *Eph.* 4. 13. Ah saith the poor soul, *my light is but little; will it ere be bright?* "'Tis but as "*the dawning of the day. I think the* "*day of grace is risen in my soul, but it is* "*but glimmering as the early morn, will* "*it ere shine gloriously? shall it ever be* "*noon? shall it be in my bosom as the Sun* "*in the meridian? will it ever rise so* "*high? Yes poor soul*, stay a *little*, and it will bee *lighter*. The *path of the righteous is as the shining light, and shineth more and more to the perfect day.* Prov. 4. 18. Christ will make it *day*, and a *perfect day* in thy heart; though it be *morning* now, and but even *Sun-rising*. Oh how sweet is Christs carriage to his weak members! that thus he strengthens their weak graces every day; he wil cherish thee *O beleeving babe*, till thou *grow bigger in his bosom.*

Fourthly, Weak beleevers have found Christs carriage very sweet, in that *he hath born with those many infirmities which hee hath found in them.*

Weak

Weak souls are apt to *slip*, and Christ sweetly *smiles*, notwithstanding those *slips*. Lambs are feeble, and sometimes they fall, but the shepherd passes it by. Christ rather *pitties* his members for their *weakness*, than *casts them off*. *Peter* was *weak*, in refusing Christs tender of *washing*. But Christ was *sweet*, he knew *Peter* was rather *ignorant* than *obstinate*. Christ tells him (and in that excuseth his weakness) that he did not know what his intention was in that action; *What I do thou dost not know*, & therefore though *Peter* carried himself *weakly*, in refusing the washing, yet Christ carried himself *sweetly*, and passing by that *weakness*, comes and *washeth* his feet. It was an infirmity of largest allowance in the Spouse, to put off Christ with such a poor excuse after he had stood so long waiting, *I have put off my coat*. Childish, as if she could not put it on again: and because she could not rise to let him in, Christ must go away in the *morning*, though he had stood knocking all *night*. Yet Christ bears all; and (though the *Spouse* might fear he would take the business so hey-

John 13.

Ver. 7.

Cant. 5. 2, 3.

nous, as never more to come to her houſe) he came again afterward. Indeed, he permitted ſome *lordly watchmen* to whip her for her *lazy weakneſs*, (and it was kindneſs thus to fetch it out) But carried himſelf *tender* ſtill, and admitted her into his *garden ſweetly*, albeit ſhe kept him out of her *houſe ſluggiſhly*. Surely *Peter*, & *James*, and *John*, failed much, to *ſleep* while their Lord *ſorrowed*; and not to regard his ſorrow, though hee choſe them out (as it were) on purpoſe, to watch with him. Indeed, Chriſt *ſighs* to ſee them ſo *weak*, as not to be able to *watch with him one hour*; yet he carries himſelf *ſweet*, and inſtead of chiding their *unwatchfulneſs*, he excuſeth their *weakneſs*. The *Spirit is willing*, ſaith he, *but the fleſh is weak*. Our children ſometimes do faults, break glaſſes, &c. but wee ſay, alaſs poor hearts, it was their weakneſs. Chriſts children are as weak as ours; onely he is kinder to his, than we can be to ours. He bears with more infirmities, and paſſeth by more faults than we do or can. Poor *Thomas* is very *weak*, hee'l not beleeve except hee may

Chap. 6. 2, 3.

Mat. 26. 41

may open Christs wounds afresh, and *put his fingers in the print of the nails.* Christ is very *sweet*, bears with all this, and is willing to have his wounds opened afresh, to help *Thomas* his faith; surely *Thomas* saw Joh. 20. Christs heart through his wounds; I *will put in my fingers*, saith *Thomas*, *or else I will not beleeve*, v. 25. Ah *poor weak soul! come and thrust them into my side* (saith Christ:) Oh tender Saviour! Ver. 27. surely Christ will *punish me* (saith the poor soul) I am so *wicked*. No, Christ (poor heart) will *pity* thee, because thou art so *weak*. Ah Lord! how many *frailties*, *infirmities*, nay *iniquities* dost thou pass by in thy poor weak *Lambs*? verily thou carriest thy self like a tender, loving, sweet shepherd towards us.

Fifthly, Its easie to discover in Christs carriage, much sweetness and tenderness to weak beleevers, in that *he puts them upon no duties above their ability.* As he will not permit them to *be tempted above their ability*, 1 Cor. 10 13. so neither doth he put them upon any business wch is above their power. Though Christ hath many works, about

about which hee will put his members, yet he will tarry till they are able for them. *I have many things to ſay unto you*, but ye cannot *bear them now*, Jo. 16. 12. Becauſe they were not able to bear, Chriſt was not willing to ſpeak. "*Alaſs, I ſee great works to be* "*done, hard leſſons to be learned; ſure I* "*ſhall never be able to do the one, or learn* "*the other*, ſaith the weak ſoul, *at leaſt*, "*not yet: for I am but a babe, very weak*: why, Chriſt is content to ſtay till thou ſhalt be ſtronger. As yet thou art *unable*, and as yet he is *unwilling*. Faſting, it was a weighty work; and Chriſts diſciples were as yet but weak: He therefore forbears them, and puts them not upon it: and when ſome wondred (who indeed knew not the weight of the work) that

Luke 5. 33 *Chriſts diſciples faſted not at all, when Jeſus did often*, Chriſt excuſeth his diſciples, and by two parables apologizeth for them; and the drift of both is this, the work was as yet too high for them; they were *weak*, and that was *weighty*. It is worth noting, Chriſt would not have the Apoſtles go from *Jeruſalem*, till they had received

power

power from on high. Hee would not leave them while (at leaſt comparatively) low, to go about a work which was ſuperlatively high, *i. e. Apoſtolical.* Never trouble thy ſelf, poor ſoul! about this or that work, which is too high for thee, above thy power, thy ability, if thou canſt clear that *ſincerely*, Chriſt will carry himſelf *ſweetly*, never call thee to it, never put thee on it.

Sixthly, it is apparent enough, and hee that runs may read ſweetneſs, and tenderneſs, in the carriage of Chriſt towards his weak members, in that he *kindly accepts of what they do in his ſervice, though accompanied with many failings.* What the poor ſoul doth *ſincerely*, that the precious Saviour takes *ſweetly*; and though it bee done but *ill*, yet he accepts it *well*. Chriſt remembers himſelf, if he gave the ſoul but *two talents*, he looks not for *ten*. And Chriſt conſiders the poor ſoul, that it hath not *much*, and therefore hee is pleaſed with a *little*. The poor creature works but *hanglingly*, and Chriſt accounts the work *brave*, he accepts the *prayer*, though

though *imperfect*, and yet that the Father may look upon it as perfect, he *mingles his incense with our prayers*, &
Apoc 8.3 so *imperfect prayers* from us, are put up *perfect* by Christ to the Father. The *weak* childe canot speak *articulately*, and yet the indulgent mother, accepteth, with much love, its poor prattle; so doth Christ: *Let me hear thy voice*,
את קולך (saith he) *for it is sweet*, Cant. 2.14. the word signifies, any sound, such as brutes or birds make. Christ accounts *stammerings* as sweet. *Meih, Meih*, saith the little one, and the mother accounts it *musick*. The poor soul, many a time, at best, and most, when it comes to pray, can but *sigh*; and the Lord Christ takes it as a sweet song, and is pleased with it. Our drink-offerings have much *water* in them, & but *little wine*, and Christ accepts of the *little wine*, though mingled with *much water*. Some think there were many failings in the womans obtruding of
Luke 7.37 her self into the Pharisees house, and troubling Christ while hee sate at meat. However Christ saw much love in the action, and not only passeth by, but excuseth the womans seeming

seeming failings, *Luk.* 7. 37. "*Woe be*
"*to me, saith the poor soul, my gold is*
"*mixed with much dross, my righteous-*
"*ness with much unrighteousness; sure-*
"*ly Christ will reject all, and me too.* No;
Christ is *kinde*, and albeit thou *carriest*
thy self, in thy choicest performances
very weakly, yet he will *carry himself*,
even towards thy failings, *very sweetly*;
and will *accept* of that which thou
doſt *kindly*, although done in *much in-*
firmity. "*Ah, could I but work neater,*
"*pray better, sing, read, &c. better, I could*
"*think Christ would accept. But alaſs!*
"*I do all that I do ſo badly, and every*
"*prayer, &c. is mixt with ſo many in-*
"*firmities, that I fear if Christ do not*
"*caſt them back with anger into my*
"*face, yet ſure he will not take them up*
"*with love into his hand; I were there-*
"*fore as good ſit ſtill, and do nothing.* Say
not thus, *O weak creature!* up and be
doing. *Carry thy ſelf* but with *ſincerity*,
and thou ſhalt finde that Christ *will*
carry himſelf ſweetly; and accept of *lit-*
tle actings with *great love*, and be plea-
ſed with thy performances, though
accompanied with many infirmities.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

Containing ſome reaſons of the point.

HAving ſhewed ſome particulars in which Chriſts carriage appears ſweet and tender towards weak beleevers; I ſhall now give ſome reaſons why Chriſt carries himſelf thus to them.

First, *God the Father who did appoint him to be a ſhepherd, did alſo appoint him to be ſweet.* It was the Fathers will that Chriſt ſhould take the care of his flock, and that he ſhould manage the care with much tenderneſs, eſpecially towards the *Lambs*. Look as Chriſt, though he had a ſingular care of all the flock (and therefore bid *Peter* feed them all) yet he had a ſpecial care of the *weak* of the flock, *i. e. Lambs*, and therefore eſpecially hee commanded *Peter* to have a care of them; and as ever he would declare his love to himſelf, he ſhould be tender over the *Lambs*, & be ſure to *feed them* (which might be another inſtance of the ſpecial care and tenderneſs of Chriſt to weak beleevers.) In like manner,

John 21.

manner, God the Father, when hee gave Christ his commission, in which he committed the whole flock of the Elect to his care, did put in as it were a singular clause, that he should be very tender of, and very indulgent towards the weak of the flock. I look upon the Text not only as a prophecy of the carriage of Christ, *what it would be*, but also as the commission of Christ, wherein the Father gives him (as it were) instructions what his carriage *should be* towards the *Lambs*, i. e. the *weak souls* of the Saints. It may not be passed by slightly, that the tender carriage of Christ towards *bruised reeds*, *and smoaking flaxes*, is built upon this, that he was *Gods servant*, as it were for that purpose sent by God, *Esa.* 42. 1. *Christs sweetness to weak believers, is his service to his Fathers appointment.* God the Father did *appoint Jesus Christ to this carriage*, when he gave him his commission. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent mee to bind up the broken in heart.* The Father charged Christ in special to carry him- Esa. 61. 1

himſelf kindly towards them. Indeed the great thing (next to the ſweetneſs of his own nature, which ſet him on to undertake the Office) that moves Chriſt, either to take freely any poor ſoul into his care, or to demean himſelf ſweetly in his carriage towards it, is his *Fathers will*, which he came to fulfill, *Joh.* 6. 38. Now it was the Fathers will that Chriſt ſhould be very tender in his carriage towards the weak.

Joh. 6.38.

Secondly, *The very weakneſs of beleevers, works a tenderneſs in Chriſts bowels, which he cannot but expreſs in his behaviour.* Weakneſs, is a word in it ſelf ſpeaking for tenderneſs. And a ſweet diſpoſition (ſuch as Chriſts is) needs no other *Oratory* to move pity, but *neceſſity*. Jeſus Chriſt knows how to hear the cry of the ſouls of his. Affliction hath a cry that can bee *heard* as high as heaven. Thou weak beleever, thy ſecret ſighs come up ſhrilly to thy Saviour. If thy boſome breath, Chriſts *bowels* hear. And the very *weakneſs* that is in thee, is argument enough with him (ſuch is his ſweetneſs) to declare himſelf very

Exod 3. 7.

pitiful

pitiful, and tender towards thee, in his carriage. The head takes care of the whole body, and every member in particular, but eſpecially of the weak, and that, becauſe ſuch; Beleevers! *Chriſt is the head of his body*, and *ye are members* (yea, ye *weak* little ones) *in particular*: And doubtleſs the *head*, becauſe *wiſe*, will have a tender care of the *toes*, becauſe *weak*. "*I fear* "*I ſhall break*, ſaith the weak ſoul; *ſure-* "*ly if Chriſt be not the kinder to mee, I* "*ſhall dye; my ſpirit will fail very ſoon,* "*if his carriage be not very ſweet.* Chriſt knows thy fear, O thou *feeble ſoul*! and it is his fear too. His language ſeems to be ſuch; *The ſpirit would fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made.* *Adam* marr'd thee poor ſoul, Chriſt made thee; and ſurely he will not ſuffer his work to fall, which would, if thy *ſpirit* ſhould *fail*. We let our bigger boys run by themſelves, while we lead our little ones in our hands, and ſhew much tenderneſs to them; and this wee do, becauſe our leaſt is the weakeſt. *Chriſt is that, and more than that* (in point of tender carriage) *to his children, that*

1 Cor. 12. 27.

Eſa. 57. 16

we are to ours. Surely if we *who are evil, know how to be tender in our carriage towards our weak children: how much more doth Christ (who is the everlasting, yea, and ever-loving Father) know how to express much sweetness and tenderness in his carriage towards his children*, and that upon this very ground, their weakness?

Thirdly, *Christ will carry himself thus, that his carriage may be convincing.* Evil men have *hard thoughts* of Jesus Christ, & sometimes they speak as they think. Wretches think that Christ is like them, because they want *bowels*, they conclude that Christ wants too. Their *bowels* are *brass*, and they will not beleeve that Christs are better. Now Christs *sweet carriage* towards weak beleevers, *confutes* all this, and might convince, that his *nature* is as his *name, Love*: (weak beleevers) Christ will make you his *witnesses*. And that you may testifie his carriage to be sweet to all his servants, he will be sweet to you who can do him but little service. Christ resolves to make his *Lambs* to bear him *witness* against the *Wolves*. His carriage

riage shall *bear* him record, that hee would have *gathered* softly and sweetly, *like as a hen gathereth her chickens* Mat. 23. 37. And because he knows *Goats* will be apt to word it (as at the last day) he will appeal to the *experience* of his *Lambs*, to testifie for his carriage. He that had but two talents, and used them as well as he could, shall be evidence enough against the evil servant, that Christ is not an *austere man*. That Christ may *stop their mouths* that are idle, and will not work, hee will fill their mouths that are sincere, though *weak*. Thy little Cistern (O weak believer) shall be filled with sweetness, because Christ will use thy Cistern as an evidence of his love. Christ will at once evince, and convince others wickedness, by the sweetness of his carriage towards thee, notwithstanding thy weakness. Mat. 25. 34

Chap. VII.

Some Uſes of all this.

I Am loath to let ſo precious a point go without its application. It may be of ſingular uſe, if Chriſt will be ſo ſweet as to help; I hope he will, and therefore,

Firſt, this might *inform us in the difference between Chriſts carriage and the creatures.* We have a proverb, *The weakeſt is turned to the wall*; but men practice otherwiſe, *caſt them into the kennel*, and trample upon them there. Ah Lord! how unlike are men to Chriſt? He is *very tender* towards his weak members; they are *very harſh*. Chriſt carries weak Saints in his boſome, and men will not let them bee in their land. O *England, England*, thy unkinde carriage to Chriſts weak ones, makes me much fear leſt he deſtroy thee! How dareſt thou be *cruel* to them to whom Chriſt is *kinde*. Verily Chriſt will deſtroy thee if thou ceaſe not from theſe *unkinde* (that I ſay not unmerciful) *carriages* of thine towards his. Thoſe that *he embraceth*, thou

thou *perſecuteſt*. Fear leſt he *tear* thee *like a Lion*, for miſ-uſing of his *Lambs*. I have ſometimes wondred, that ever any who pretend to be *ſhepherds* under Chriſt, ſhould preach, or preſs a *non-bearing with thoſe in the Kingdom, whom Chriſt bears in his boſome*. Surely theſe *ſub-ſhepherds* differ very much from the *ſupream-ſhepherd*, who is kind and tender to all, but eſpecially the weak of his flock.

Secondly, *This doctrine might beget in us lamentation over many, who are indeed Chriſts Lambs, but are apt to utter unkind and untrue ſpeeches of their ſhepherd*. It makes me ſad to hear a Lamb of Chriſt, ſigh, and ſay, *Surely Chriſt will caſt me off; I am ſo feeble that I can do nothing that is good, and ſo faint, that I do much which is bad. I am ſo weak, that I cannot come to him, and therefore I cannot think that he will be ſo kind to come to me*. Ah poor ſouls! when did you ever find Chriſt ſo *unkind* in his carriage, as to make you ſpeak thus? *When was Chriſt a wilderneſs to thee?* what harſhneſs haſt thou ever found in him, that thou ſpeakeſt thus hardly of him? ſurely I lament to

hear thee ſaying, it is in vain to wait on Chriſt, but I bleed to hear thee crying, (as they, *Jer.* 2:31.) *Thou will never more come at him*: why poor ſoul? why? is not Chriſt ſweet? is not his carriage tender? doth hee not *gather with his arm*? doth not he *carry in his boſome*? I, he doth ſo by ſome, but he will not do ſo by me. Yes by thee (O poor ſoul!) it is his cuſtome to be ſweet, in his carriage, to his weak members, ſuch as thou art: verily I lament to hear any ſpeak otherwiſe of Chriſt, than he is, and they ſhall finde.

Thirdly, The ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage, *reproves the ſowrneſs of ours, towards his weak members.* The Prophet asketh the queſtion, (as it it were ſtrange) *who hath deſpiſed the day of ſmall things?* Zach. 4. 10. Though few, or rather none ſhould, yet many do; *deſpiſe* ſhall I ſay, or *diſcourage*, or both, or worſe; ſuch, as in whom *the day of grace* is but *dawning*; but be reproved ye *rugged ſpirits*, Chriſt bears much with his weak ones, and you bear but little. Thou dareſt not deny, but that ſuch are in the faith, but thou wilt

wilt say, they come not up to believe all that thou dost, they are weak: what then, wilt not thou bear with them? shall the *elder son* beat the *little child*, his brother, because he is not so big as he? shall the Dr. in Christs School *disdain* and abuse the *under-graduate*, because not so profound as himself? shall the *strong* beat the *weak*, because they are not so *strong* as they? should not they rather *bear with them*? what? because some of the *Lambs* cannot follow so fast as the *strong of the flock*, shall they be cast off for that? Ah Lord! shall *children* be whipped, and scourged, for not going as fast as *men*? Did you ever read of such a thing in Christs commands? did you ever see such an instance in Christs carriage? Surely we must rejoyce to hear some speaking in *Jacobs voice*, meekly for *unity*, &c. but we must *reprove* them, when we feel them with *Esau's* hands, handling weak ones roughly, for want of *uniformity*. Christ reproves (and then it will be to purpose) those that carry themselves contrary to that carriage, which they see in him, towards weak beleevers.

Rom. 15. 1 βαστάζειν i. e. to bear upon our shoulders.

Fourthly, Chriſts carriage being thus towards weak beleevers, it muſt needs comfort them to think of it. *Ah Lord, what a weak creature I am!* why, be of good comfort; thou art weak, and Chriſt is ſweet to ſuch as thee.

Obj. *The dugs of divine love are full, but I am very feeble: I cannot ſuck, though Chriſt open his boſome; and I muſt needs die, my weakneſs cannot live.*

Anſw. Bee of good comfort poor creature! Chriſt will not only open his *boſome*, but thy *mouth*. He will take thee up in his *arms*, and *carry thee in his boſome*; will not this refreſh thee?

Obj. Yes: *But I cannot fetch out the milk that lies in his breaſt; I want a ſtrong faith to draw, I am but weak.*

Anſw. Be of good comfort (*weak ſoul*) Chriſt is ſweet, and with his fingers hee will force out the milk of mercy, into thy mouth, (as the mother doth to the weak infant) if thou canſt but open thy mouth; though
Pſal. 81. 10 thou be without breath (*i. e.* ſtrong faith to draw) Chriſt will *fill thee*.

Obj. *My feet are ſo feeble, that whereas I ſhould run the way of Chriſts commands,*

mands, I can hardly go; I am fain to creep upon all four to follow Chriſt, and yet am faint when I do but ſhun. Ah Lord! ſaith the poor ſoul, *I ſhall be left behind.*

Anſw. Say not ſo; Jeſus Chriſt will tarry, and take thee in his hand; and rather than he will leave thee behind, he will *carry thee in his boſome.* Remember it, and rejoyce, O beleevers, *Chriſt is very ſweet in his carriage towards his weak members.*

But ere I proceed further in this Uſe, it is meet I put in ſome ſigns of thoſe ſouls, to whom I chiefly intend this comfort. *Wee muſt muzzle the dogs, while we feed the Lambs.*

Firſt, *This may comfort thee, O poor heart, whoſe grief it is to think how much ſin thou haſt, and how little grace;* who mourneſt to ſee *ſelf high*, and *Chriſt low* in thy heart. Me thinks I hear thee cry, *O wretched ſoul that I am! my corruption is ſtrong, it makes me do the evil which I would not; my grace is but weak, I cannot do the good which I would. O woe unto me! my heart is hardned to Chriſts ways, I cannot fetch a turn in them, but my feet are ſwift to evil.* Verily thus it is with me; and I am ready

ready to dye to think that it ſhould be thus; *what a little ſpark of fire is my grace? but what a vaſt ſea of water is my corruption? my heart breaks with fear to think leſt Chriſt will caſt me off, and have nothing to do with me. If I pray, or teach her liſp, it is with much deadneſs, and little life. If I read, hear, &c. it is with little fintenity, and much infirmity.*

Q. What, will Chriſt be kind to me?

A. Yes poor Lamb, he will: His carriage was, is, and will be very tender, and ſweet, to ſuch weak ones as thou art.

Secondly, *Thou that canſt do but little for Chriſt, and weepeſt to think or ſee any do much againſt Chriſt. Ah Lord! what a poor worm am I, that cannot kiſs Chriſt, while others ſpit upon him; others can, and do crown him with thorns, but woe is me, I cannot crown him with gold. Others can, and do buffet him, but poor I cannot embrace him. It goes to my heart, to ſee ſome putting a reed into his hand, while I make a Scepter to put there (which is a thouſand times more fitting.)*

Q. Will ever Chriſt regard mee that can-

cannot cry Hosanna, while others do crucifie? what, will Christ kiss me that do not, cannot give him wine, while others give him vinegar? Other wretches thrust him thorow with a spear, and I wretch cannot embrace him that while. I beseech you Sir, will ever Christ *own me, look upon me?*

A. Yes, yes, poor heart, Christ loves thee that thus weepeth for him: hee takes it well that thou goest in mourning, while he is in sackcloth: though thou cannot *take him down* from the crosse, yet he accepts of thy *weeping while thou standest by*, & canst but look on. If thou hast but a *Lamb-like love* to mourn while thou seest *thy shepherd smitten*, Christ hath a *shepherd-like* sweetnes to pitty thy weaknes, though thou cannot relieve him.

Thirdly, This comfort is for thee, that *albeit thou mournest that thy grace is but little, yet thou prizest it so much as that thou wilt not part with it for a thousand worlds. Ah Lord! my life, saith the poor soul, is but weak: I am rather dying every day, than alive at any time. My faith is so weak, that you may better call it a painted hope, than a powerful be-*

lief.

neſs. My light *is ſo dim, that it is more like the Glo-worm in the hedge, than a ſtar* (though of the leaſt magnitude) *in the firmament.* Be it as thou ſayeſt, *O weak ſoul.*

Q. What wilt thou take for thy life?

A. Not a million of Rocks of Diamonds.

Q. Wilt thou part with thy faith?

A. No, not for all the riches of the creatures.

Q. Shall I buy thy light?

A. No, if you would give me the light of Moon and Sun, and the Stars to the bargain too. Well, comfort thy ſelf, O thou poor Lamb. Thy Shepherd is very tender to al, but eſpecially to ſuch as thee. His tenderneſs will take the advantage of thy weakneſs to abound the more. *As thy weakneſs ſhall abound, ſo ſhall his ſweetneſs alſo towards thee.* O conſider this Text and truth, you weak of the flock; ye who are *weak in your life*, that can hardly ſtir; and *weak in that light*, and can ſcarce ſee; and *weak alſo in your faith*, and can hardly beleeve: Be of good comfort, the Lord Chriſt, who is the *Shepherd of your ſoals*, will have a ſpecial

cial care of you his *Lambs*. He is ſweet and tender in his carriage to all, but eſpecially his weak members. *Comfort ye one another with theſe words.*

Fifthly, This Doctrine ſerves to *incourage you to duty*. You, O poor ſouls, though weak, Chriſt will bee ſweet in his carriage towards you; *pray, read, hear*, &c. do all that Chriſt calls for; though thou be *weak*, yet ſtand not out; *Chriſt's kindneſs* will paſs by thy *weakneſs*. If thou be *ſincere*, remember he is and will be ſweet. Let this grace make thee to abound with, and to overflow in *acting of duties*, as *demonſtrations of love*. If thou *act from love*, Chriſt will *receive in love*.

Sixthly, This Doctrine calls for *imitation*. Chriſt is tender in his carriage towards his weak members, ſo ſhould wee. Do not diſhearten, but incourage weak ſouls. Be yee full of bowels of love, as Chriſt is. His carriage is *ſweet*, let not ours be *ſowr*. Chriſt deals tenderly with weak beleevers: O my Brethren, *Be ye followers of Chriſt as dear children.*

Obj. *But theſe, & theſe differ from me*

Q. But in what, in fundamentals?

A. No

A. No, they hold all there as I do, Christ is my foundation, and no other foundation do they lay.

Q. Do they differ from thee in practice?

A. No, as to the main, both of worship, and walk, we are alike; I pray, read, expound, hear, &c. and they do so too. I walk godly, and they labour in all things to have a good conscience.

Q. Wherein then is your difference?

A. It is in Government.

Q. What, will not they be governed by Christ? will they have any other ruler, as to spirituals, but Jesus? or do they deny lawful obedience to Civil power?

A. No, but yet in matter of Church Order, and Government, they will not do as I; they do not hold as others.

Q. Is it out of wilfulness, or weakness, that they do thus?

A. I fear the first; sure I am it is by reason of the second, their weakness. O friends, I beseech you then, remember, Christ bears with weak Lambs;

Lambs, do ye the like: His carriage was sweet to all weak beleevers, let ours be so too: for they are our weak brethren. You that are strong, ought to bear with them that are weak, *Rom.* 14. 1.

Lastly, This Doctrine *cries loudly to such as yet wander from Christ, that they would come in.* Friend, Christs carriage is, and it will be sweet. *Absaloms* carriage was *seemingly sweet*, and it was *strongly perswasive*, many followed him in the simplicity of their hearts, because of the appearing sweetness of his. Beleeve it, that which was but a *show* in *Absolom*, is a *substance* in *Christ*: He *kisses* every soul that comes to him. And when he takes the government in any heart, he carries himself *uprightly*, and tenderly too. You all love a mild government; you hate tyranny, and it is your desire to be under a Scepter managed with sweetness. Every one would serve a Lord whose name is love. O that you could but beleeve this truth. *Christ is a most gracious Soveraign. Sweetness is his Scepter.* *Alphonsus* won much upon the people, by taking a sheep out of the

2 Sam. 15.

Psal. 75. 2 *Talis Rex est Christus Mollerus in locum.*

the ditch. Jeſus Chriſt takes not one, but all his ſheep out of the ditch. He *gathers* them, though dirty, with his *arm*, and *carries* them in his *boſome*. Will not this yet win thy heart to ſerve Chriſt? If this will not, then think of the *ſeverity* of Sathan, whoſe ſheep thou art, all the time that thou keepeſt off from Chriſt. When God would diſſwade the people of *Iſrael* from that kinde of government, which it ſeems, his ſoul liked not, and under which, he was unwilling they ſhould be, ſaith God, by his mouth to him. *He will take your ſonnes, and appoint for himſelf, for his chariots, and to be his horſemen, and ſome ſhall run before his chariots; and he will take your daughters to be Confectionaries, and to be Cooks, and to be Bakers, &c.* ſo goeth on to ſhow how that in all things hee would ſeek himſelf, and not them. ſo that they ſhould *cry out, &c.* It ſeems, God fore-ſeeing the miſery of ſuch a condition, that they would be in, if they ſhould come under that government which they fooliſhly (& ſinfully too) deſired; would diſſwade them, by telling them of that before, which he

1 Sam. 8. 11, 12, 13, &c.

he knew they would feel afterward. In like manner, let me tell you, if you will ſerve Sathan (and you muſt ſerve him if you will not ſerve Chriſt) Sathan will be a cruel King to you. He will ride thy ſoul and body too. He will make thee only to ſerve his luſts (though thou thinkeſt to bee thine own.) Ah poor ſoul! mee thinks I ſee the Devil ſitting upon thy ſhoulders. Hee laſheth thee cruelly, though thy brawny back doth not feel it; hee will ride thee off thy legs; and he is on the way to hell, and when horſe Thou, and rider Sathan, fall into that pit, thou wilt cry out: But O then it will be too late. Therefore be wiſe now, *Kiſs Chriſt to day*, and he will preſently kiſs thee. Enter into his ſervice, and thou ſhalt experience his ſweetneſs. His carriage is very kind in ſundry particulars, and upon all occaſions, as you have heard. *Come, taſte and ſee*, and you ſhall find Chriſts carriage to bee ſweeter to thy ſoul, than thou canſt expreſs. *He gathers his Lambs with his arm, he carries them in his boſome.* He is the faithful, yea, and the merciful Shepherd of his

flock. This is his *name*, this his *nature*. Becauſe of the ſweetneſs of this name *which is as an ointment poured forth, the virgins love him*, do thou too. Oh that in the ſavour of this *odour*, thy ſoul could run after him. Oh that theſe cords of love might draw thee to Chriſt, and bind thee to him. Verily who evet thou art, if thou come in to Chriſt, and imbrace him, thou ſhalt finde his carriage to be exceeding tender; and though thou mayeſt ſee much weakneſs in thy ſelf, yet thou ſhalt experience much ſweetneſs in Chriſt; for it is his *office*, his *charge*, his *care*, his *carriage*, to bee *ſweet* and *tender* towards all his, eſpecially thoſe of his that are *weak*.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Chriſts ſweet carriage to ſuch as are weak accidentally; and who they are that are ſo.

Eſa. 40. 11.

Hee ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.

CHAP. I.

HAving in the former Section diſcovered (in ſome meaſure) the *ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage* (in a general way) toward ſuch of his as I did call *habitually weak*, I ſhall now come to ſhew that his carriage is the ſame in ſweetneſs, towards thoſe who are *accidentally weak*. And as in the former part, I ſpake of Chriſts *ſweet carriage* to thoſe that are *habitually weak*, by what is ſaid of his demeanour to his *Lambs*: in like manner, I ſhall ſet out the

carriage of Chriſt as ſweet to thoſe that are *accidentally weak*, by what the Prophet ſpeaks here of his carriage to *thoſe that are with young*.

He ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.

Now as a foundation I ſhall lay this poſition, which is clearly deducible from theſe words of the Prophet, *viz.*

The carriage of Chriſt is very ſweet towards all his members, who are accidentally weak.

Accidental weakneſs, what it is.

I call ſome members *accidentally weak*, to diſtinguiſh them from ſuch as are ſo *habitually*. And I uſe this phraſe of *accidentally weak*, becauſe I would by it note thoſe, in whom indeed the *habits of grace are ſtrong*, and ſo they are not liable (as the others were) to a conſtant *weakneſs*; only at ſometimes upon ſome occaſion (*as it were by accident*) they become *weak* and *feeble*. As now *Men* who are (that I may ſo ſay) *habitually ſtrong*, and ſo not liable unto that *conſtant weakneſs* which is in *children*; may yet ſometimes be *accidentally weakned* by ſome great work which they are to do; ſome

ſome great ſorrow or ſickneſs under which they lye; or elſe by ſome great and deſperate fall which they have had. In like manner, believers who are grown up to *Men* in Chriſt Jeſus, and ſo freed from that *habitual weakneſs* which is in *Babes*, yet notwithſtanding, ſometimes come to be *accidentally weak*, by reaſon, either of *great ſervices*, to which Chriſt calls them, or *ſharp ſufferings*, unto which Chriſt doth bring them; or elſe by *ſome falls into ſin*, which through infirmity (and as it were by accident) they have taken. Now of Chriſts *ſweet carriage* unto ſuch, I ſuppoſe the Prophet doth ſpeak here under the metaphor of a ſhepherds *ſweet carriage* towards thoſe *that are with young*. Even the *ſtrong of the flock* (ſuch as the *Ewes*) may be, and ſometimes are *weak* (eſpecially when with *young*) or (as the word will alſo bear) when *they give ſuck*. For *bearing*, and *giving of ſuck*, do (as it were *accidentally*) much *weaken*. And thus Chriſts carriage is ſweet to his, who are not only weak *habitually*, as *Lambs*; but alſo who are *accidentally* weak, as *Ewes that give*

ſuck, or elſe *are with young*, for ſo the Rabbins, *Solomon Jarchi*, and *David Kimchi*, with other our late Expoſitors, do gloſs this place of the Prophet.

Now for the better proceeding in this point, and ſo for a clearer diſcovery of the ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage towards his weak members; I ſhall do two things.

1 Diſcover *who thoſe are which I thus call accidentally weak.*

2 Demonſtrate *how Jeſus Chriſt is ſweet in his carriage towards ſuch.*

For the firſt of theſe, *viz. who are weak believers accidentally.*

Beſides what I have already hinted concerning ſuch, I ſhall adde this generall deſcription of them, *viz.*

Who are accidentally weak

They are ſuch, as in whom the *light*, and *life* of ſaving and ſanctifying grace are, in ſome good degree and meaſure: And who for the moſt part in the general way, and order of their life, are fit, and able both to undertake and go through (*ſtrongly and ſucceſſefully*) thoſe common, and *ordinary duties* of Religion, in which Chriſt doth for the moſt part exerciſe his

his members; ſo as that you may rank them with thoſe, who are in the *higheſt form* of Chriſts *School*, not only above *little children*, but even above the *young men*, *with the Fathers*: And of whom you may conceive the Apoſtle ſpeaks, when hee ſaith, *wee that are ſtrong*: But yet notwithſtanding, by reaſon of ſome occurrences in their Chriſtian courſe; and ſome paſſages which *providence* doth (*as it were by accident*) now, and then, permit to befall them, they are much debilitated and *weakned thereby*; ſo as that they do in that reſpect, at ſome times lie and groan under ſome *weakneſs*.

But becauſe it were too large a field to go out into, if I ſhould inquire after all the ſeveral ſorts of beleevers, who in this ſenſe, at ſome ſeaſons, or upon ſome occaſions are weak: I ſhall inſtance onely in three particular *kinds* of that which I call *accidental weakneſs*, and ſhow how Chriſts carriage is ſweet to thoſe who labour under ſuch *weakneſs*.

A threefold weakneſs by accident.

1 There is *weakneſs which comes by work or labour*.

2 *There is weakneſs that comes by ſickneſs or falls.*

3 *There is weakneſs which comes by grief or ſorrow.*

With reference to this threefold *weakneſs*, I ſhall ſpeak of Chriſts *ſweet carriage* of himſelf unto three ſorts of *weak beleevers.*

1 Such *as are weak, by reaſon of ſome great work, unto which Chriſt doth call them*, or about which Chriſt doth ſet them; and about which Chriſt doth not (at leaſt commonly) ſet all his members.

2 Such *as are weak, by reaſon of ſome falls and ſlips into ſin*, either through their own inward corruption, or ſome outward temptation.

4 Such *as are weak, by reaſon of great ſorrow or grief*; which they may happily take, becauſe of ſome ſufferings, or tryals, whereunto Chriſt (*in a more than ordinary way*) doth bring them.

Of the *ſweet carriage* of Jeſus Chriſt to each of theſe, I ſhall ſpeak particularly, and by themſelves: And ſo much the rather I ſhall ſpeak of theſe, becauſe I conceive that the phraſe here

here used by the Prophet, may allude, or be applyed to either, or all of them.

The phrase is, *Those that are with young*; which Translation I think is better than that *of giving suck*, because the word in the Hebrew is, עָלוֹת which is used *Gen.* 33. 13 and so rendred there, *the flocks and the herds with young*; and it is used thus, and so rendred, *Psa.* 78. 71. and there it is expressed by *Ewes great with young*. The Hebrews, when they do speak of giving suck, do use another word, and that more proper for it, *i. e.* הֵינִיק from יָנַק *suxit*, which signifies to give suck; so that the phrase being thus, *Those that are with young*, I think it may allude to those three sorts mentioned, *viz.*

וְהַצֹּאן וְהַבָּקָר עָלוֹת

מֵאַחַד עָלוֹת

1 *It may allude to those that are weak by work.* Thus *Paul* sets out his work for the Lord Jesus towards the *Galatians*, as if he were big with them, as an Ewe is big with young. *My little Children, of whom I travel in birth.* Galat. 4. 19. *Paul* in the work of his Ministry, was as it were big with young. In like manner, any beleever

ver called out to, or ſet about more than ordinary work, may be ſaid to be big with young. And ſo much the rather, becauſe the work of child-bearing, or of being big with young, and to bring forth, is a work which doth *weaken* more than ordinary; to this the generality of Expoſitors apply this place.

2 It may allude alſo unto ſuch as are *weak by reaſon of falls into ſin*. So thou ſhalt finde the phraſe of *being with childe*, or *young*, often in a particular manner applyed to ſuch as are big with ſinne. *Vox ſignificat* (ſaith *Ilyricus* upon the word) *tum pœnam, tum culpam*. And ſo it is uſed both in a ſenſe of ſinning, and of ſuffering: ſometimes ſinne and temptation (*through the incogitancy of the beſt beleevers*) may commit as it were a ſpiritual *rape* upon the ſoul; and the beleever may bee (as it were) *big with young*, in a ſinful ſenſe. For when temptation comes, and in a manner forceth the ſoul, there is ſomething *within us* (which was not in Chriſt) and that may concur, and conduce to a *ſinful conception*; and the ſoul may be

be *big* (as it were) with *sinne*. The Apostle hath a phrase which is to this purpose, *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth*, *Jam.* 1. 15. It is an alusion to a natural conception and birth. So that we shall not, I suppose, over-much strain the place of the Prophet here, by applying this phrase to this thing also. Sad experience tells us, *that the chastest sonls of the Saints, are sometimes in this respect, guilty of spiritual adultery*. Beleevers are sometimes big of illegitimate births and conceptions. *Lust* sometimes may *conceive*, and they may be *big with young*, in that respect also.

3 It may allude unto those that are *weak by reason of sorrow and sufferings*. And thus the holy Ghost doth often use the Metaphor of being *big with young*. As *Esa.* 26. 18. *We have been with childe, and been in pain*. And thus the great sorrow and trouble unto which God threatens to bring his people, is set out by their *being as it were big with young, and holding their hands upon their sides*, Jer. 30. 6.

CHAP

Chap. II.

Chriſts carriage to ſuch as are weak by work, demonſtrated to be ſweet.

THe firſt branch, or kind of that *accidental weakneſs*, unto which beleevers are lyable, is (as in the former Chapter I noted) *weakneſs by work*. So that now according to the method which I propounded, I am to ſhew and make good this Propoſition, *viz.*

The carriage of Jeſus Chriſt is very ſweet, to every beleever that is weak, by reaſon of work.

Sinners are ſometimes *big with young* in regard of wicked works, whereunto Satan excites them. Hence is that phraſe, *Pſa.* 7. 14. *He travelleth with iniquity, and conceiveth miſchief.* Now towards ſuch, God carries himſelf ſeverely, and is (as the Pſalmiſt there notes) *angry* (i. e. with them) *every day*, v. 11.

Saints are ſometimes *big with young* in regard of good works, unto which the Spirit doth ſtir them. And towards theſe Chriſt carries himſelfe ſweetly.

ſweetly. For (as the Prophet here ſpeaks) *he leads them gently.*

The expreſſion notes two things, as proving the Propoſition.

1 That *Jeſus Chriſt is ſo ſweet to thoſe that are weak* (while in, or about ſome holy work) *that he is with them, and leads them.* As he ſaid to his Apoſtles, *Behold I am with you to the end of the world,* (that was, in regard of ſtrength and aſſiſtance) ſo he doth to all his working members. He doth aſſiſt them, he is with them, and hee leads them. Beleevers are ſent about ſome work of Chriſt ſometimes as it were a long way; and Chriſt (that he may ſhew himſelf ſweet) goes with them, and *leads them.* The Ewe big with young is unweldy, and it is pain unto it to go. Now the ſhepherd that is ſweet, leads it. And the beleevers big with young (*i. e.* bent, reſolved upon ſome good buſineſs for Chriſt) is weak, and in pain it is, while in travel, till it be delivered: Now Jeſus Chriſt to ſhew his ſweetneſs to ſuch a ſoul, takes it by the arm (as it were) and leads it.

2 That Chriſts carriage may appear

pear to be sweet, *he is not onely present to lead, but tenderly present to lead* [*gently*] He leads softly that he may lead sweetly. I know there is but one word in the original, but it includes both these, *viz.* the act, and the manner of the act. The word is יְנַהֵל from נָהַל which signifies as Hebricians know, *commode & leniter ducere*, i.e. to lead commodiously and softly. *David Kimchi* glosseth it, he shall lead them according to their quiet, or commodity, *i. e.* so as may sute best with their quietness and ease. Jesus Christ doth not drive furiously, but tenderly. He doth not (as the same Rabbin notes) over-drive his flock; but gently, softly, and sweetly, he leads all his weak-working members. He will lead you, O yee working beleevers! according to your weakness, step by step, as *Vatablus* glosseth the place. Christ will not first lay a heavy burden upon your back, and then come after lashing, to make you run, when it may be you can hardly go: but he will come, and lead you, and walk with you, your own pace: As he will assist, so he will assist sweetly,

ינהל
לאטם
רלא
ירפקם

Pedetentim

ly, *He will lead* [*gently.*]

Thus as *Jacob* (the moſt faithful and merciful man that ever was a ſhepherd) ſaid of his flocks and herds with young, he would not over-drive them, but (ſaid he) *I will lead on ſoftly, according as the cattel that goeth before me can be able to endure*; or (as it is in the Hebrew) according to the eaſe of their feet, *Gen.* 33. 14. In like manner, Jeſus Chriſt, hee will ſoftly lead (for the word is the ſame in both places) his Ewes big with young; he will gently lead thoſe that labour in any work of his. Thus ſweet is his carriage towards thoſe that are weak, by reaſon of any great work about which hee ſets them at any time, and with which they are big by the holy-Ghoſts over-ſhadowing of them. Working beleevers, mind it. Your work (you ſay) is hard, it overpowers your ſtrength, and it makes you weak: remember Chriſts carriage ſhall be ſweet. Hee will be with you in your work: And that it may appear he is tender, and mindful of your weakneſs, he will lead you, and that very *gently*; ſo ſaith the Prophet,

He

Hee ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.

Chap. III.

Six particulars ſhewing Chriſts carriage to be ſweet to all weak-working Beleevers.

THat you may yet more clearly ſee the ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage towards all ſuch members of his, as are weak in regard of work; I ſhall declare it in ſix particulars.

1 Chriſts carriage appears to bee ſweet and tender towards his weak-working members, *in that he puts them about no other work than ſuch as himſelf hath done.* Maſters and Soveraigns carry themſelves ſweetly to ſervants, and ſubjects, when they imploy them in no worſer works than themſelves would do. It is reported of *Lycurgus* (the great Law-maker) that he impoſed nothing by Law upon others, of which hee did not firſt ſhew a pattern in his own practice. It is true of Jeſus Chriſt, you read of no work which he requires of his, which himſelf

Nihil lege ulla ſanciret in alios cujus non ipſe primus in ſe daret documentum Dan. Par. in Hiſt. Univerſ. medul. p. 40.

selfe did not while in the flesh. Doth he require beleevers to resist Sathan, fight with the Devil? *Jam.* 4. 7. He did the same himselfe, *Mat.* 4. Doth Christ call upon beleevers to *pray alwaies*, 1 Thess. 5. 17. and *strive in prayer*? Rom. 15. 30. He did as much himselfe while on earth. He prayed often, he prayed long, all night, *Luk.* 6. 12. and fervently, *with strong cries*, and *tears*, Heb. 5. 7. Are beleevers called to *fast*? (an extraordinary work, and such as is not for every day, no, nor for every Christian, as Divines gather from *Luk.* 5. 36, 37.) why consider Jesus Christ in this work went before them. *He fasted*, and that longer than he requires us, even *forty daies*, as it is *Mat.* 4. Must Ministers *preach, dispute, contest* for the truths of the Gospel? they are to do no more than what Christ hath done before them. Beleevers, did Christ ever call you to any service about which he would not go himselfe if need were? Servants, you have good Masters, who put you about no worse work than they would do themselves. And beleevers, you have a sweet Saviour, who

did do that himſelf, about which hee ſets you, and never will lay that burthen upon your backs, which hee would not (if need were) bear himſelf. Oh how ſweet and tender is Chriſt to all his working members, in not ſetting them about any ſervice but what he is willing to do himſelf! Oh beleevers, you may comfort your ſelves in any ſervice to which Chriſt calls you, with this thought, what though the buſineſs be burthenſome? what though the work be weakning? yet ſtill Chriſt is ſweet, kinde, tender, in that he hath ſet you about no other, than what himſelf hath done.

2 It is eaſie to ſee ſweetneſs in the carriage of Chriſt toward his working members, in that *he hath provided, and accordingly gives incouragement unto them, anſwerable to all the diſcouragements they do, or can meet withall.* *Ezekiel* was to go out upon ſome deſign for *Chriſt*; and ſuch was his weakneſs, that he falls at the appearance of Chriſts coming to command him: But mark what Chriſt ſaith to him, *Son of man ſtand upon thy feet,*

Ezek.

Ezek. 2. 1. Christ loves (saith a late Commentator upon this) to incourage man to his duty. It is the weaknes of beleevers, when set about any work, they are apt to dispond and be discouraged: But it is the sweetnes of Christ, he is ready to raise up their spirits, and to take off their discouragements.

Three things usually discourage beleevers, when they are to set about any business for Christ; and Christ is so sweet, as that he hath provided, and doth give out incouragements answerable to them all.

1 *Internal reluctancy in your own spirits.* I would, and I could do this or that (saith the beleever) but I find such reluctancy within, my heart is so backward, my spirit so unwilling, that it discourageth me much; why? Christ hath said hee will make thee willing. *His people shall be a willing people*, Psal. 110. 3. Christ hath provided a *voice behinde* to put thee on to that, whereunto thou art backward. *Thine ears shall hear a word behinde thee* (because of the reluctancy that is in thee) *saying, this is the way, walk in it* Isa. 30. 21

Saints are unwillingly willing, and willingly unwilling.

I will put my *Spirit* within you (which is a *free Spirit*) and becauſe you are backward, & unwilling, he ſhall make you *forward* and willing, *and cauſe you* (ſweetly) *to walk in my ways*, Ezek. 36. 28. Chriſt hath provided an incouragement anſwerable to this diſcouragement of thine (Oh beleever.) Thy Spirit is unwilling, and doth reſiſt, his Spirit ſhall take that away.

2. *Diſgrace, and oppoſition from man*, is a great diſcouragement to working beleevers: and Chriſt hath provided incouragement ſuited thereunto. Men will deride me, and oppoſe me if I do this or that; the diſgrace of the proud, and the oppoſition of the violent, do mightily weaken my hands in work, ſaith the beleever ſometimes. But know, O ſoul! Chriſt hath provided incouragement anſwerable to this. Thou ſayeſt, men oppoſe thee, Chriſt ſaith, he is with thee; *Fear not, I am with thee* (ſaid the Viſion to *Paul*) *Act* 18. 10. Men thou ſayeſt, diſgrace thee, O weak-working ſoul! The Father (ſaith Chriſt) will honour thee. *If any man ſerve me, him will my Father honour*, Joh. 12. 26. ſtrengthen thy

weak

weak hands (O working soul!) with these words: Here is suitable incouragement unto thy discouragement in this particular also.

3 *Doubt of success* discourageth sometimes those who are upon work for Christ. The hands of the beleever begin to fall down in the midst of his work, when he doubts of success. I shall labour in vain (saith the soul) this discourageth me. *Your labour shall not be in vain* (saith Christ) let that incourage thee, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *Moses* being to go to *Pharaoh* about a gallant work (*Israels* freedom) he doubts the success, *But behold they will not beleeve me* (saith he) *Exod.* 4. 1. that discouraged him; Christ therefore takes off that discouragement. *If they will not beleeve at the voice of the first sign, they will or shall beleeve the voice of the latter*, saith the Lord. I would fight & resist Sathan: shall I be successful? yes, O beleever! Christ hath said so *He, i.e. Sathan shall fly*, Jam. 4. 7. & *the God of peace shall tread down Sathan under your feet*, Rom. 16. 20. Thus answerable to all those discouragements wch beleivers are liable to meet with,

Chriſt hath provided incouragements; and this clearly argues Chriſt to bee ſweet in his carriage towards his working members. But

3 In as much as *Chriſt gives ability and ſtrength to perform whatſoever hee calls any beleever to*; it is clear, that his carriage is ſweet to thoſe which work; Chriſt gives power to do whatever hee ſets believers about; *Ezekiel* muſt ſtand on his feet, alaſs! he is weak, and cannot. Chriſts Spirit therefore enters into him that he may. *Stand upon thy feet, Son of man*, (ſaith Chriſt) *and the Spirit entred into him, and he ſtood up*, Ezek. 2. 1. I thank our Lord Chriſt, who hath *inabled me*, ſaith *Paul* unto *Timothy*, 1 Ep. 1. 12. the Apoſtles muſt preach to all Nations, and Chriſt gives them tongues to inable them ſo to do. Ah! ſaith the poor ſoul, the work is weighty, and I am weak: True, but Chriſt will make thee ſtrong and able, O weak ſoul. If the burthen bee big, thy back ſhall bee ſtrengthened. Chriſt will not lay a heavy burthen upon weak ſhoulders. Doubtleſs he will ſtrengthen thy ſhoulders, O beleeving

ſoul,

ſoul, according to the weight of that he laies on. I muſt anſwer before Kings, and Councellors, and States for Chriſt (ſaith the beleever) But alaſs, the work is weighty, and I weak. Fear not, O beleever! Chriſt will be with thee, and will give thee a *mouth, and wiſdom, which all thy adverſaries cannot be able to gainſay, or reſiſt*, Luk. 21. 15. I am to go a long journey for Chriſt, but I have but weak legs (ſaith the ſoul) why Chriſt will ſtrengthen thy legs, O ſoul! according to the length of thy journey. I am to lift a great weight (ſaith the ſoul) and have but weak hands. Chriſt will ſtrengthen thy hands according to the weight which thou art to lift, O poor ſoul! What ever the work be, about which Chriſt ſets any ſoul, if the ſoul carry it ſelf ſincerely in doing, Chriſt will ſhew himſelf ſweetly in helping. Howſoever *hard-hearted Pharaoh* may command the number of bricks, and not give ſtraw to help; yet *tender-hearted Chriſt* will not. If he command the ſoul to work, he will ſend the Spirit to help with ſtrength ſuitable to that work.

4 Chriſts carriage appears to bee ſweet to working beleevers, in that *he will perfect their work by his own ſtrength, wherein it was deficient by their weakneſs. Thou worke ſt all our works for us, and in us*, Eſa. 26. 12. The beleever works, and leaves that which he doth very imperfect, becauſe of his weakneſs: But Chriſt comes, and perfects that imperfection, becauſe of his ſweetnes. *Lord* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *thou wilt perfect that which concerneth me*, Pſal. 138. 8. The beleever is ſet on the work of *prayer*, and Chriſt ſends the *Spirit* to help his *infirmities*: And at the end of prayer, hee takes it, and *mingles with it his own incenſe*, and ſo preſents it perfect to the Father. His pure water perfects the ſouls puddle. Look as the writing-School-Maſter, not only holds the hand of the learner, in every letter, but after all, takes the pen, and perfects the whole: So Jeſus Chriſt holds the hand all the while the beleever is writing (ſuppoſe a love-letter to Heaven) and becauſe of the ſhaking of the beleevers weak hand, there are after all, many imperfections, hee takes the golden

pen

pen of his own grace, and perfects every letter, that it comes to the Fathers hand perfect. O the dark, and deformed lines, that beleevers draw, when ſet about ſome curious peece! How imperfectly do they perform that, about which they are ſet ſometimes? But O the ſweeteneſs of Chriſt! who comes with his own peneill, and after all, perfects thoſe imperfections. Beleevers carry themſelves weakly in all their works, and almoſt mar all, about which they are ſet, but Chriſt carries himſelf ſweetly, and comes and mends all that they do amiſs, making their botched and bungled works very brave with his own hand. Surely, beleeving ſouls, you have found this. How many times did Chriſt ſet off that duty richly, which came from thee poorly? How oft hath he perfected thy imperfect performances? when thy weakneſs came ſhort, hath not his ſweetneſs made it up? Beleeve it, friends, Chriſt carries himſelf ſweetly toward working beleevers

5 The carriage of Chriſt appears to be ſweet towards, &c. *in that hee comes*

comes in often to the ſouls of his working members with refreſhing in the midſt of their labours. Beleevers are weak, and (while at work) are apt to bee weary, and to faint: But Chriſt ſhews himſelf ſweet, in that he viſits them, and refreſhes them in their work. It was the praiſe of *Boaz*, and it was a ſweet carriage of his, when he went into the field, where his ſervants reaped, to incourage them in their work. And it is the praiſe of Chriſts ſweet carriage towards working beleevers, that he viſits them frequently, and incourageth them ſweetly while they are about his work. *Baruch* was at work for Chriſt, when he had written the words of Chriſt at the mouth of *Jeremiah*; but he began to flag and faint: And Chriſt gave a particular Prophecy to the Prophet, to comfort and refreſh *Baruch*, Jer. 36. *Chriſt gives power*
Eſa. 40. 29 *to the faint, to them* (who by working have as it were) *no might*, he refreſheth and *gives ſtrength*. *Daniel* was at a great work, and his ſtrength was almoſt gone while he *faſted*, and there came *like the appearance of a man* (that was not Chriſt, but an Angel from Chriſt)

Christ) and he *strengthened* him. Oh the sweet refreshings, which Christ, by his Spirit, brings into the souls of weak Saints, even when they are ready to faint and sink in their work! How oft (O beleeving soul) hath Christ refreshed thee, by his sweet spiritual smilings on thee, even in the time of duty, and while thou wert about his work? Surely, thou must needs say, Christ carries himself sweetly toward working beleevers; doth not thy experience in this particular, seal to this truth?

6 It is evident, that the carriage of Christ is sweet to the working Saints, *in that at the end of their work he gives them rest and reward.* It is sweetness in Christ, that he should accept any work of the beleevers, but more, that he should reward. Christ will deal sweetly with his working servants, he hath made *beds* of *rest* for them in glory. Sathan deals not so; his servants never rest to eternity. I am weary (saith the working believer) thou shalt *rest* anon, Oh weak soul! *There remains a rest to the people of God,* Heb. 4. 9 The word is a keeping of a Sabbath.

They shal rest in their beds Esa. 57. 2. ἀναπαήσονται ἐπὶ τῶν κοιτῶν αὐτῶν.

There

There is a ſweet and a long *Sabbath* remains for you, O working Saints! and the morning thereof is ready to dawn: one bout more and it will be day. You ſhall *reſt from your labours*, Apoc. 14. 11. Chriſts will is ſweet to thy ſoul (O weak beleever) and hee hath provided reſt for thee. There is a *Sabbath* appointed for your ſouls. *Working Paul* ſhall have that reſt; yea, and *weak thou* too, when the day ſhall dawn. You who are thus troubled ſhall have *reſt with us* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with the Angels of his power*, 2 Theſ. 1. 7. And if reſt be not enough to declare Chriſt to be ſweet to his working members, they ſhall have reward alſo. You ſhall not loſe your labour, yee working Saints: Chriſt comes, and his *reward* is with him, *Apoc.* 22. 12. you ſhall not work all day and all night too. Beleevers, you ſhall reſt at *night*, & have reward in the *morning*. The upright ſhall have *dominion in the morning*, Pſal. 49. 14. For a days work, you ſhall have eternities reſt. For a little labour in this world, you ſhall have an everlaſting reward

reward in the other world. Oh ſweet Chriſt! that giveſt long reſt for a little labour, and great reward for a little work. Surely, when you ſhall in the end of your daies work go into *Immanuels* land, and there reſt your ſouls upon the roſie banks that are by the Chriſtal ſtreams which run there, you will cry out, Oh! How ſweet is Chriſt towards his working members, that gives ſuch raviſhing reſt to them after all their works for him; when the day ſhall be in which Chriſt ſhall come with Crowns of glory to put upon the heads of working Saints, and you ſhall feel the weight of that glory, with which you ſhall then be crowned; then you will ſay, Oh the ſweetneſs of Chriſt towards working beleevers, who gives ſuch an *eternal weight of glory*, for ſuch *light* and *temporal works* as the beſt Saints do. Conclude (O thou beleeving *Ewe*, who art big with young) that the day comes in which thou ſhalt travel, and bring forth; and then thou ſhalt ſee that Chriſt deals ſweetly with ſuch as thou art, when for the joy of that reſt, and reward which thou ſhalt

have

have hereafter; thou ſhalt forget thy work, and thy weakneſs under which thou didſt groan, and travel here. *The ſhadows* apace *fly away*, and the *day* begins to *dawn*; in which Chriſt ſhall give, both ſweet, glorious, raviſhing, eternal reſt, and reward to all his working members; and then ſhall the fulneſs of this truth be ſung, *viz.* that Chriſt is very ſweet to all weak-working beleevers.

Chap. IV.

Some reaſons of the point.

YOu have ſeen both [*that*] and [*how*] Chriſt carries himſelf ſweet to working beleevers. I will now adde a word why Chriſt doth thus. And there may be (to omit others) three reaſons given of this.

1. *Chriſt loves to make his carriage anſwerable to himſelf.* He is ſweet in himſelf, and therefore will ſhew it by being ſo to his. As he will declare ſweetneſs to thoſe who are weak, and cannot work at all, ſo will hee ſhew ſweetneſſe to thoſe who vvork, and are weak therein, or thereby. As

Chriſt

Chriſt ſees our condition, he is moved with compaſſion. He hath *yerning bowels* towards working beleevers, and he cannot refrain (ſuch is his ſweetneſs) but he muſt ſhew it. Men love to ſhew themſelves (as we ſay) what they are. Chriſt doth ſurely love to carry himſelf ſweetly, that beleevers may ſay, *As we have heard, ſo have we ſeen in the Saviour of our God.* Others, by their words told us, that Chriſt was ſweet, and in our works we finde it ſo. When Chriſt ſpake to the man ſick of the Palſie, *Thy ſins be forgiven thee*; he did it, that men might know the power of his God-head, (ſaith he, giving the reaſon of that ſpeech) *that ye may know the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins*, Mat. 9. 6. As Chriſt ſpeaks in ſuch a manner, as that he may be known to be what he is, ſo he acts alſo, he *leads* his working members *gently*, and carries himſelf toward them ſweetly, that he may declare himſelf to be as he is.

2 *Chriſt ſees that thoſe that work for him, cannot work without him*: Therefore it is that he carries himſelf ſo ſweetly to them. The ſtrongeſt Saint

is

is too weak for any work if left by Chriſt. Indeed Chriſt cannot have his work done by any ſoul, in caſe hee deal not ſweetly with it. The *big Ewe* cannot go, if not lead *gently*; and the working beleever cannot act, if not dealt withall ſweetly. *Without me ye can do nothing*, Joh. 15.5. this Chriſt ſees, and therefore it is that he is thus ſweet. Becauſe Chriſt knows our weakneſs, as that without him we can do nothing, therefore he ſhews his ſweetneſs, that by him we may be *able to do all things*, by his ſtrength.

πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐν δυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ. Phil. 4.13

3 Chriſt is thus ſweet in his carriage towards his working members, *that hee may leave all without excuſe*. Chriſts carriage to his ſhall condemn wretches at the laſt day, that will be none of his. Sinners will be ready to ſay, we did not ſerve thee, becauſe there was harſhneſs in thee: Thy work was hard, and thou wert auſtere: Thy ſervants went for the moſt part in ſackcloth, while others wore ſilk, &c. Now Chriſt will ſtop their mouths by his ſweet carriage. Wretches that will not work for Chriſt, ſhall bee left without all excuſe, when they

ſhall

shall bee told, and convinced of the sweetness of Christ; to his working members. Christ is resolved to stop all mouthes in that day. His sweetness to *labourers, shall silence loyterers.* His *gentle leading of workers, shall condemn the idle living of wanderers.* The *Ewes* that have been *big with young*, shall witness against those that would not have Christ to be their Shepherd: Christs sweet carriage to the one, shall convince and condemn the obstinate standing out of the other. Wretches, Christ calls upon you to work for him; he hath given you talents, and he bids you imploy them; you are fearfull and sluggish; you *hide your talents*, and spare your pains; you do not, will not act, or work for Christ. Consider, you shall be without excuse at the great day: It will be foolish and false to plead, Christ was a hard Master. His working members by their experience shall confute you, and Christs sweet carriage to them shall leave you without apology, or excuse.

Chap. V.

Some Uses of the Point.

HAving seen the sweetness of Christs carriage towards all his Ewes, and such as are big with young, i. e. those who work for him; I shall offer something by way of application, in some uses. As,

It serves to discover the difference between Christs service, and all other service, and between his carriage of himself towards those that work for him, and the carriage of all others towards any that work for them. If men serve the world, they do not finde (alway at least) sweet carriage. It is often seen among men, after their work is over, the workman is oft forgotten. It stands upon record, as one of the greatest stains of the *Roman* State, that after *Scipio Africanus* had sincerely and successfully served that Common-wealth (when it was almost spent and ready to die) and had thereby raised it up, he was banished, or forced to inhabit in a poor waste desert. Insomuch that when he died, he commanded this to

be

be ingraven over his sepulchre, *Ingrata patria, ne ossa quidem mea habes.* The Common-wealth was so base, as not to have his bones, who saved their blood. *Solomon* tells us, of a poor man, who had been very serviceable to a distracted State, when it was warred against by a great Prince. The *poor man* delivered the City by his *wisdom*, but no man did so much as *remember that same poor man*, Eccles. 9. 15. And it is reported of Cardinal *Woolsey*, that upon his Death-bed he should say in much sadness of spirit; *If I had so faithfully served Jesus Christ as I have done my Master (Hen.* the 8.) *he would not have cast me off, as my Master the King hath.* Oh! that men could but see the difference that is between the service of man, and the service of Christ: However the *sons of men* will deal (like themselves) with their servants *sordidly*, the *Son of God* will deal with his *sweetly*.

2 This Doctrine may also *reprove those, who deal not with Christs working members, as Christ doth.* Oh how cursedly and coursely do many deal with Christs workmen! How do they de-

ride, diſgrace, oppoſe, and proſecute the *Ewes* of Chriſt, *i. e.* thoſe that are big and travel in work for him. How did a company of vile perſons vilify *Paul*, who yet was as an *Ewe*, ready to bring forth, who was in travel with the *Galatians*, as with Chriſts *Lambs*. And *then thoſe that were born after the fleſh did perſecute him, that was both born and* [*bearing*] *after the Spirit; even ſo it is now.* But nevertheleſs, *what ſaith the Scripture?* what ſaith the point, *Chriſt deals ſweetly with his working members.* Are they not then to be reproved that deal harſhly? Be reproved therfore all of you (eſpecially you that pretend to the work of Chriſt) for not dealing kindly with his working ſervants; ſeeſt thou a perſon, or Preacher that doth the work of the Lord, that preacheth Chriſt, worketh for Chriſt? be reproved for thy unkinde, unchriſtian dealing with him, as knowing that in that thou art very unlike to Jeſus Chriſt. Be reproved therefore, O ye rugged ſpirits, who deal ruggedly with any of Chriſts working members; what though they differ from thy way, if they do

Chriſts

Chriſts work, Chriſt deals ſweetly with them, and ſo ſhould you.

3 The truth of this Doctrine falls heavy upon thoſe, *who being both inabled for, and called to the work of Chriſt in any kinde, and yet refuſe it.* Friend, how is it that Chriſt hath given thee a talent, and thou wilt not occupy it for his uſe? How is it that Chriſt hath given thee parts, and ſet thee in place, and afforded thee opportunities to ſerve him, and yet thou wilt not work? Dareſt thou ſay, either that he is a hard Maſter, or that his work is unreaſonable, or his carriage unkinde? Be convinced ye loyterers that will not labour for Jeſus Chriſt: At the day of account you will want an excuſe, when all the working members of Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come and ſay, *The work that we did for Chriſt was honourable; the incouragement which we received from Chriſt was unſpeakable, and his carriage to us all along, was paſſing ſweet and amiable;* then will you be dumb and ſpeechleſs, as not having any thing to ſay for your ſelves why you ſtood out from his work and ſervice,

4. The Doctrine speaks *incouragement to all those who labour for the Lord, who are at work for Christ.* You that are in Christs *Vineyard*, that labour (though in the heat of the day), who sweat in the service for your Saviour, consider, his carriage is, and will be sweet towards you. *Go on, hold on, give not out:* you are in his service who is very sweet: what ever the carriage of the standers by be, his will be like himself, *i. e.* loving.

Obj. But yet (will you say) we find harsh usage in the world, meerly for being in this work. Wee think wee should be dealt better withall by men, if we did not do so much for Christ. Surely, if we were onely *Lambs* our selves, we should find kinder carriage; But this renders us hateful, and makes men harsh, that we are *Ewes big with young*, i. e. that we are indeavouring to bring forth somewhat for Christ, that we would have other *Lambs* as well as our selves, and that we can never be well, but when at work.

Ans. Well, be it so, yet be not discouraged: It is your glory to be Christs *Ewes*. Christ hath dealt well with you,

you, in making your able to work for him, and he will carry himſelf kindly to you, while you work for him. What though the Travellers by the way curſe, and revile the labourers in the field, ſo long as the Lord of the Harveſt (*Boaz*-like) bleſs them, and ſpeak kindly to them; *The Lord be with you.* Verily (ye working Saints) who are labouring for the Lord Chriſt, you have no juſt ground of diſcouragement from all the unkinde uſage of the creature, ſo long as you have the kinde carriage of Chriſt. Oh! *be not diſcouraged ſo as to give out, but be rather incouraged, ſo as to go on in the work of the Lord,* for as much as you know your labour ſhall not be in vain, and that Chriſts carriage to you-ward, ſhall be ſweet.

5 Laſtly, The Doctrine ſpeaks *comfort to all the working members of the Lord Jeſus.* You *Ewes that are big with young*, here is a point *big with comfort*, You go on heavily; you groan while in travel; you cry out (as the Prophet in another caſe) *My belly, my belly!* well be of good comfort, Chriſt is with you, and will be ſweet in his carriage

to you, while you work Chriſt cannot be away; Chriſt is not abſent and idle, while you are travelling in his work; no, he is preſent, and will bee helpful; he will be with you, and lead you gently.

Q. *What is thy work* (O *bleſſed* Ewe) *what art ready to bring forth?*

A. Why (will ſome ſay) my work is woful. I am working too, not to bring forth any great good, but to caſt forth great evil. Chriſt hath ſet mee on work to cleanſe a kennel, to carry out a dunghill; I mean to conquer corruption, and to caſt out luſts, and the very ſmell of my luſts is ready to choak me; and which is worſe, I can ſcarce maſter my work; nay it almoſt over-maſters me; yea, and I have cryed more than once and again: *thrice have I beſought Chriſt*, and yet I labour in this work, and can do but little at it.

Be it ſo (O working Soul!) yet Chriſt is and will be kinde. *His grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and his ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs*, as it is, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. He ſhall inable thee in time to maſter thy work. *Sin ſhall*

not have dominion over thee, Rom. 6. 14. Thou ſhalt bee made Lord over thy *luſts*. There is *a blood of ſprinkling* which ſhall *cleanſe thy kennel*. Thou *reſiſteſt* thy ſin *unto blood*, and thou doſt *bleed* while at work againſt corruption, yet it remains (thou ſayeſt.) But know, ſtill Chriſt is ſweet, and his carriage to thee ſhall be ſo. And therefore, though all thy *blood* and *ſweat* will not *cleanſe* thy ſoul, nor do away thy *ſin*, yet the *blood* of Chriſt ſhall, as it is, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7.

Obj. But oh! (ſaith another ſoul) I am at harder work than this: It is my work to war with the *Wolf*: I am labouring againſt *Sathan*. Many temptations daily beſet me. Not any meſſenger of Sathan, but Sathan himſelf doth beſet me. Surely (you will ſay) my work is grievous; is it not?

Reſp. True, but *thy Lord is gracious*. Chriſt is with thee all this while (O working ſoul!) Hee hath promiſed thee to *make a way for thy eſcape*, 1 Cor. 11. 12. you may expect kind carriage even while you are in this work, and know, that hee will help you to go

through

through with it. *The very God of peace will* (or ſhall) *ſhortly tread down Sathan under your feet*, Rom. 16. 20. It may be Sathan doth ſtand ready to devour that *bleſſed birth*, wherewith thou travelleſt; but know, Chriſt is near alſo, and he will help thee. Build upon it (O thou working beleever!) Chriſts carriage ſhall be kind unto thee.

Obj. Nay, but (ſaith another working ſoul) I have been labouring a long while; the work about which I have been ſet is almoſt over, but firſt, I want a little ſtrength to perfect it; and ſecondly, I am in much fear, whether when it is done, it ſhall be accepted. Now this grieves me, this troubles me.

Reſp. Well, but hear O ſoul! thou art at work for a kinde and ſweet Maſter, who will help thee with ſtrength to perfect thy work, and crown thy work with acceptation, when perfected.

For help: Know he will work all our works for us, and in us, *Eſa.* 26. 12. He will *work in you both to will and to do, and that of his good pleaſure*, Phil. 2, 13. yea the Spirit of Chriſt (which

is

is the power from on high, ſhall help your infirmities. Rom. 8. 26. This is the ſweetneſs of Chriſt whom ye ſerve, that never did any ſervant fail in his work, for want of his help. And

For acceptance: Be confident O believer; Chriſt will accept of every endeavour of thine in his work. It is Chriſts nature to accept of what we have, and not to look for what wee have not. *Pigeons are welcome, where Lambs are wanting. Sighs are ſweet, and groans are acceptable unto him.* Yea in Chriſts work, *Voluiſſe ſat eſt*, A willing minde is accepted. Trouble not thy ſelf, O working ſoul, about acceptance. Do thy beſt, be thou ſincere; and bee of good comfort, as knowing this, that Chriſt is ſweet. His carriage ever was, ever will be, paſſing tender to all his *Ewes big with young*; very ſweet to all thoſe that work for him.

προθυμία ἐυπρόσδεκτος. 2 Cor. 8. 12

Obj. But alaſs! will ſome ſay, my caſe is comfortleſs. For it is true, Chriſt is ſweet to his members that work for him; but what is hee to thoſe who ſinne againſt him? Wo is me, I have been big, but it hath been with

with *badneſs*; and I have brought forth but oh, it hath been *wickedneſs*; what will the carriage of Chriſt bee unto me?

Anſw. Why for ſuch ſouls; I ſay at preſent no more but this, Jeſus Chriſt is *a merciful High Prieſt*; He knows how to have *compaſſion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way*, Heb. 5. 2. hee is a *ſhepherd*, that can be kinde unto the *Lambs* that wander, and go *aſtray*. It is his grace (and therefore his glory) that hee can bee ſweet, even to you (O poor beleevers) that have been ſinfull. And this is that which I am to make out in the next Section.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Christs sweet carriage unto Beleevers weak by sinnes.

Esa. 40. 11.

Hee shall gently lead those that are with young.

CHAP. I.

GOD in *Nature* hath provided *a Salve for every Sore*: And Christ in *Grace*, hath provided *a Cordial for every Beleever*. It is your Saviours *glory*, that he is furnished with suitable sweetnesses (O beleevers!) unto your weaknesses. And it is his *grace* that he is as (nay more) ready to give them forth, than you can be to need them. In this Scripture is held out Christs sweetness unto weak beleevers, who are such (as I distinguished) accidentally. Now these I divided into three ranks, *viz.*

1 *Such*

1 *Such as are weak through work*, (unto which I ſpake in the foregoing Section.) And

2 *Such as are weak through falls*: unto which I am to ſpeak now. And

3 *Such as are weak through ſufferings*: which will be the ſubject of the laſt Section.

So that now the buſineſs here is to ſhew the *ſweetneſs* of Chriſt unto thoſe members of his, who are *weakned by falls into ſinnes*, which I ſaid might alſo be couched under this Metaphor of being *big with young*.

The word עֻלּוּת comes from עוּל

The Scripture tells of a conception of ſin; *Jam.* 1. 15. *When luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin.* And the ſame Apoſtle tells, in many things we ſinne all, *James* 3. 2. Yea *John* tells, that if we (i.e. thoſe whoſe fellowſhip is with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and who walk in the light, and have fellowſhip one with another) *ſhall ſay we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 Joh. 1. 8.

So that there being in Saints the *ſeed* of ſin, there may be a ſinful *conception* ſometimes in them; and they may

may be *big with young* in that sense. Indeed all our steppings aside from Christ (especially unto sin) is called in the Scripture *a whoring, and adultery*. So that it will be no straining of the Metaphor in the *text*, I am sure it will be no deviation from *truth*, to say that Christ carries himself *sweetly*, and *deals gently*, even with those who have been, or are *weak*, by their being *big with young* in a sinful sense.

The thing therefore which I shall now speak unto, is this, That

Christs carriage is sweet, even to those members of his, who are weak by their falls into sin.

Chap. II.

Some things premised for the right understanding of the point, and the proof of it.

That I may the more clearly proceed without mistake, and make good the Doctrine, I shall premise three things.

1 *That the best beleevers are liable unto falls into sinne.* Even the choicest Saints,

Saints, may ſometimes either by more *violent rapes*, or *ſecret temptations*, be *big with young* with ſin. *Solomon* tells us, that a *juſt man falleth ſeven times*; Prov. 24. 16. In the caſe of *Bathſheba*, *David* himſelf did *conceive*, and he was *big with young* by ſinne. It is true, Saints by reaſon of that *immortal ſeed* of grace within them, do not, indeed cannot make a *trade* of this, they are not (as I may ſay) common *Strumpets*; they do not make this *ſpiritual* (as *David* did not that literal) *adultery* their trade: yet ſtill I ſay it is poſſible that ſometimes they may, and indeed are overtaken this way. Albeit grace do ſometime render the *conceptions* of ſin *abortive*, and moſtly doth kill them as ſoon as born, daſhing the *brats* of ſin (while young) againſt the ſtone, breaking them upon crucified Jeſus (that I may allude in a ſpiritual ſenſe to that *Pſal.* 137. *ult*) Notwithſtanding all this I ſay, yet ſo, it too too often is, that even Saints, and true members of Jeſus Chriſt do fall into ſin, or as the phraſe is, do *conceive* and *bring forth* that which is ſinne. Experience, and conſcience witneſs unto this,

this, that even ſuch as are *born of God*, do ſometimes bear ſin. That is one thing which I did premiſe.

2 *Beleevers by falling into ſin, do become weak*: Their *being big* doth render them *feeble*; as breeding and bearing in a natural ſenſe do much weaken, ſo doth it alſo in a ſpiritual ſenſe. *Sorrow* and *conception* go together, and every bringing forth is with pain. Sin is the greateſt weakner that can be. The ſoul is moſt unhealthful when, and while ſinful. Sin makes *feeble hands*, and *weak knees*. The very *habits* of grace (which are our new-birth ſtrength) are exceedingly debilitated by the acts of ſin. *David* after his *lying in* with *Bathſheba*, was much weakned; there was no *health in his bones by reaſon of that breeding*. Any fall weakens in a degree. Saints ſinnings are their *fallings*. *David broke* his *bones by ſin*. Strong men are oftentimes weak by falls which they have taken, & Saints otherwiſe ſtrong, are yet very weak after their falls into ſin. Indeed *wickedneſs* is *weakneſs*. How weak is the ſoul after ſin! How little a puſh of temptation throws it down! How eaſily is *David*, being weakned Pſal. 38. 3.

with *adulterous conceptions*, over-thrown by *murderous ſuggeſtions*! and how long was it after that, ere he could work again? Till *Nathan* came to viſit him (as is gathered from the title of the 51. Pſalm) *David* had made no ſong. He was ſo weak, as till then he could not work: *Nathans* viſit was (as we ſay) *Davids* up-riſing. It ſeems he *lay in* long upon that ſin, and was ſo weak thereby, as that hee could not work, till the Prophet rouſed and raiſed him up. Surely his ſin did make him very weak. Beleevers! I think you will feal to this, that ſinnings make you feeble; wickedneſs renders you weaklings; your ſighings ſay it is true. This is the ſecond thing I would premiſe.

3 The next is this, *Jeſus Chriſt is diſpleaſed with beleevers ſin.* Adultery is diſpleaſing to the Husband. Chriſt is your *Husband* (Beleevers) and he cannot but bee angry with your ſinnings, for they are your adulteries. Chriſt cannot ſmile upon your ſinful brats. *It were unhusband-like in him, not to be offended at them.* The Lord Jeſus loves chaſte ſouls. To be *ſpiritually bar-*

ren,

ven, or ſinfully big, are both alike diſpleaſing to Chriſt. As he is angry, when we conceive not by him, ſo hee is offended if he ſee us conceive by ſin. Not to abound in good fruit is a failing; but to have any bad fruit is a fault. You who have at any time been big with young in a ſinful ſenſe, tell mee, dare you ſay Chriſt ever liked it? nay, was he not offended at it? Jeſus Chriſt muſt needs lothe bad conceptions, and bringings forth, becauſe he loves good ones. It is certainly the weakneſs and wantonneſs of ſome that think and ſpeak otherwiſe. Chriſts anger and ſin go together. *Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt, though thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions.* It is ſpoken of Chriſt (who is *Immanuel*, God with us, or the *Lord our God*) Pſal. 99. 8. This therefore I premiſe in the third place, that Jeſus Chriſt (though well pleaſed in the main with beleevers, yet hee) is diſpleaſed with them, when they have rendred themſelves weak by ſin. Chriſt likes not to ſee corruption rocked in the cradle. Hee loves not to ſee *David* in *Bathſheba's* boſome; Chriſt though hee loves ſinners, yet lothes

Omnis amor continet in ſe aliquid odii.

ſins; he is diſpleaſed with the ſinnes, though pleaſed with the perſons of his people. This being premiſed, I ſhall now prove the point, *viz.*

That Chriſt's carriage is ſweet, even to thoſe members of his, who are weak by falls into ſin.

Peter will be a proof to this. *Dear ſoul!* Satan got leave to *winnow* him, and he *weakned* him. Yet Chriſt was very ſweet for all that. I ſuppoſe you know his fall, it was great. *He denies Chriſt*, and ſwears he knew him not; there is one degree, *He ſtands to the denial*, and is not aſhamed of what hee had ſaid, but lies, and ſaies, *he was not one of them that belonged to Chriſt*. Ah Lord, how he tumbles down! yet he falls a ſtep lower: He begins to curſe himſelf (καταναθεματίζειν) *i. e.* to execrate and anathematize himſelf, if hee were, &c. what a fall is here! Surely *Peter* brake his bones (though Chriſt, which was his ſweetneſs, kept his neck) with this fall. How weak was he by his wickedneſs? The Damoſel that looked upon him, and ſpake to him, ſurely raped his ſoul. *He conceived ſin, and brought forth a lye:*

lye: and he was very *big with young*, for the lye was very great. Well, yet Chriſt *led him gently*; hee looked on him graciouſly. Chriſt was ſweet, though *Peter* was ſinful. Doubtleſs, *Peter* felt his bones broken by that fall, ſurely he was weak, and that made him *weep bitterly*: yet notwithſtanding Chriſt was very ſweet in his carriage towards him: And therefore hee left ſpecial word with the Angel, to bid the women tell his Diſciples, and *Peter* (*ſpecialiter dicit & Petro*) of his Reſurrection, and going to *Galilee* to meet them, and him. Chriſt prayed for him before he fell, in an eſpecial manner, (*I have prayed for thee*, ſaith he) and looked upon him after hee fell. Minds him at the Reſurrection, confers ſweetly with him before the Aſcenſion, *Joh.* 20. Shall I need to adde more, to let you ſee how ſweet Chriſt is to beleevers, weakned by falls into ſin?

It was ſingular ſweetneſs in Chriſt towards thoſe *ſeven Churches* that fell, and were much weakened by their falls. He looked upon them all, and wrote to them all; and however ſome

paſſages in his Epiſtles to them were ſevere, yet the very writing of them, and the end thereof was ſweet.

I will adde but one Scripture to prove this point, yet more. It is, *Iſa.* 57. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was wroth, and ſmote him* (Chriſt I ſaid before, is diſpleaſed with his members ſinnings) *and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Ah Lord! what weaknes is here, to grow worſe for whipping? yet ſee, Chriſt is ſweet for all this. *I have ſeen his ways, and I will heal him: I will lead him alſo*, ver. 18. Juſt almoſt as it is in the text, *He will gently lead thoſe that are with young.* Covetouſneſs is Idolatry; to bee big with this is abomination, (Chriſt was wroth to ſee it) but to harden the heart under chaſtiſements is worſe: Surely a ſoul thus fallen, is very weak, yet even to ſuch ſouls Chriſt is ſweet, his carriage kinde; for even thoſe *he heals*, theſe *he leads*, and to thoſe he *reſtores comfort.*

CHAP

Chap. III.

One general demanſtration of the ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage to ſinning Beleevers.

HAving cleared the point a little in the intent thereof; and having alſo offered ſomething for the proof thereof, I ſhall now further demonſtrate the tenderneſs of Chriſts bowels unto ſin-weakned ſouls, in his carriage unto them, both generally and particularly.

Generally, Conſider how that *Jeſus Chriſt takes much pains, and lets out merciful power for the raiſing of fallen beleevers, and for the gathering of wandring Lambs*: And this conſidered, demonſtrates Chriſts ſweetneſs at firſt ſight. Sinning ſouls, Chriſt will not loſe you. Though you through weakneſs *wander* from him; he will not let you go: he will *walk after* you, while you wander; and becauſe he is ſweet, he will *gather* you from your ſins. He that *gathers* weak *Lambs* with his great *arm*, will gather alſo wandring *Ewes* with his *Shepherds crook*. You

know the parable of the *loſt ſheep*, Luk. 15. It concerns you who have gone *aſtray* from your Lords fold. Beleever, thou ſayeſt thou haſt wandred in the waies of ſin, and art *a loſt ſheep* (that is, loſt in thy own ſenſe) know, thy Shepherd is ſweet, and will not loſe thee, he will ſeem rather for a while to leave others, that hee may ſeek thee. When *Antigonus* a King paſſing by a ditch into which a ſheep was fallen, the Hiſtorian ſaith, he pulled it out (though ditty) with his own hands: and for this hee was exceedingly beloved and commended of his ſubjects. *Heavenly ſheep*, your King is kinder; he will not only ſtoop to filthy ditches of ſin into which you fall, and take you out with his arms, but he will lay you in his boſome; that he may waſh you with his blood. He deals not thus with all ſinners, but he will deal thus with you. *Judas* falls into one ditch, hee betrays his Maſter. *Peter* falls into another, he denies his Maſter. Chriſt lets *Judas* lye, but takes up *Peter*. Minde this, O ye poor of the flock! Though Chriſt let *Judaſſes* fall and periſh, he will gather his *Peters*.

Say

Say now, Is not Chriſt ſweet in his carriage towards his own, even when they ſinne? It may be thy ſoul hath been ſtragling abroad (*Dinah*-like) and ſome corruptions or temptations (*Shechem*-like) have *humbled thee*, ſo that thou art *big with young*: Now how is it with thy ſoul? Is it not very weak? Doth not joy faint, and faith flag? Art not ready to ſay, Chriſt will whip me for my wandring? hee will be ſorely diſpleaſed with me. I dare not ſay Chriſt is not diſpleaſed at this: Indeed his *Spirit is grieved* (*Jacob*-like) at this; yet let me tell you, he is ſweet, and ſo will bee notwithſtanding this. Adde not weakneſs to weakneſs: ſay not, Chriſt will never be ſweet more, becauſe I have ſinned now: But know, he is and will be ſweet in this, that he will be avenged on the head of ſin, for defiling thee. He will take thee into his heart, and caſt that whereof thou art big out of thine: Say beleevers, after ſinnings, hath not Chriſt made you moſt out of love with ſin? Have not you *hated it after, more than ever you loved it before*? *Ephraim* ſhall ſay, *What have I any more to do with Idols?* Hoſ. 14. 8. Hath not Chriſt made you

to

to defile that which defiled you? and have not you *caſt it away* as a *menſtruous* cloath, ſaying unto it, *Get thee hence*? as it is, *Iſa.* 30. 22. How hath Chriſt ſhewed all his *ſeverity* againſt your ſins, of which you were *big*? and how hath he mean while been good unto your ſouls? He hath, and doth deal grievouſly with your ſins, deſtroying them; but he deals graciouſly with you, gathering you. Witneſs to the ſweetneſs of your Shepherd, O ye *ſinning Ewes*, who have been *big with young*: Hath not he gone after you, and found you, and laid you on his *ſhoulders rejoicing*? Hath he not dealt with you as with *David*: when you went *aſtray like loſt ſheep, did not he ſeek you*? Pſal. 119. 176. And when he found you, did hee deal with you according to your ſinfulneſs? Did he whip you all the way home? Rather did he not *lead you gently*? Now doth not this demonſtrate undeniably, Chriſts ſweetneſs to you, O yee ſinful beleevers! If Jeſus Chriſt, after *luſt hath conceived in us, and brought forth ſin*, ſhould leave us to our ſelves, till *ſin being finiſhed ſhould bring forth death*, as it is, *Jam.* 1. 15.

15. If Chriſt I ſay, ſhould deal thus with us, could we deny his *juſtice*? But now for Chriſt, even when wee have been *big* of ſin, to *lead* us *gently*; not to *leave* us to our ſin, but to gather us out of it, and to raiſe us after it, ſurely this doth declare his ſweetneſs. But this is only a general demonſtration; I ſhall therefore adde ſome particular ones.

Chap. IV.

Some particular demonſtrations of Chriſts ſweet carriage unto beleevers, weak by ſinning.

THe firſt thing wherein Chriſt declares his ſweetneſs unto ſinning beleevers, is, *his chaſtening of them for their ſinnings. Solomon* tells us, that *He that ſpareth the rod* [*hateth*] *his ſon, but he that* [*loveth*] *him, chaſteneth him betimes*, Prov. 13. 24. *Chaſtiſement for ſin is a priviledge peculiar to Saints*: It is *childrens bread*; *Baſtards* go without it; and this *bread* (as I may ſay) of *affliction* doth Chriſt give his members after ſinning. And that this is ſweet dealing, will appear, if you conſider,

1 *Its Covenant-priviledge, promiſe-mercy*, ſo ſaith the Text, *If thy children forſake my Law, &c. If they break my Statutes, &c.* [*Then*] *I will viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes*, Pſal. 89. 30, 31, 32. Beleevers, Chriſt deals ſweetly with you, when he chaſtiſeth you after falls into ſin. He will chaſtiſe you with the rod: It is true, he will *not caſt you off* for your ſins; no, nor whip you with Scorpions; yet he will chaſtiſe you (for every one whom he receiveth after falls, he deals ſo with for the moſt part) His rod (not of iron, but) *of men*, ſhall be upon you; and thoſe *ſtripes* wherewith he will *chaſten* you, ſhall *be the ſtripes of the children of men*, as it is, 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. Where that in the Pſalm is taken. So that Chriſt deals ſweetly with you, when after your ſinnings he chaſtiſeth you for his *Covenant-priviledge*.

2 *It is denied to others*: Chriſt deals not thus ſweetly with all ſinners. They ſin, and are not in ſorrows as others. Its the *thundering voice of wrath* (as *Origen* obſerves) that ſaith, *I will not puniſh your daughters when they commit whoredom*, Hoſ. 4. 14. Sinners commit

mit *whoredome*, and are not *punished*; Saints are but *big with young*, and *chastised*. Indeed those *onely* hath Christ *known of all the families of the earth*, and therefore he punishes them, that is, (as the Hebrew word signifies) visits them. Beleevers, Christ lets others sin and comes not near them: It is his wrath. But you fall and sin, and Christ *visits* you, take it as his love. He doth more for you, than for them; and it is sweet dealing. This then is the first particular. *Christ carries himself sweetly unto sinning beleevers, in that he chastiseth them for their sins.*

Amos 3.3.

אָפְקֹד

Chastisings for sin, are Christs visits of the soul.

Indeed his chastisements are their *meltings*, they serve to *purge* them from their sins; and how else, or what else *should he do for the daughter of his people?* as it is, *Jer.* 9. 7. It is the care and tenderness of the husband-man to lop and cut corrupt branches: And it is Christs care over you (and when he declares it, he shews sweetness to you beleevers) to cut you, either when you are not fruitfull in good, or when your buddings are bad. *And this is the fruit of all, to take away sin*, Isa. 27.9. Now surely this is sweet. There

is

is a difference between ἀιρεῖν & καθαίρειν. Its one thing to cut, another thing to cut off. It is maternal and ſweet to give the ſick childe a Pill (though bitter) to purge out *corrupt humors* that hinder health. Beleevers! Chriſt ſhould not be as tender as a *mother*, (and yet he makes himſelf more, *Iſa.* 49. 15) if hee ſhould not *purge you*, after ſinnings, *i. e.* chaſtiſe you. *For by this is the iniquity of* Jacob *purged.* Iſa. 27. 9. And how ſweetly doth Chriſt deal with ſinning Saints, in *purging* them from their ſins, while hee lets others lye, and *rot*, and periſh, for want of *puniſhing purges?* But

2 Chriſt deals ſweetly with ſinning beleevers, *in that he doth not caſt them off for their ſins.* As ſins before beleeving could not make him to reject them: ſo ſinning after beleeving, doth not cut off love from them. Though he viſit their ſin with ſtripes, yet *nevertheleſs his loving kindneſs will he not utterly take from them, nor will he ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail,* Pſal. 89. 33 you break your faithfulneſs in ſinning (ſouls) and that is weakneſs enough; But if you think, that Chriſt for

your

your sinning will take away his love, you make him unfaithful too, & this is greater weakness. *Though you forsake the guide of your youth, and wander till you are big with young, forgetting the Covenant of your God; yet Christ will not forsake you, nor break his Covenant with you.* Christ should break Covenant, if for [your] sins (O beleevers) he should cast you off from love. *Dinah* had weakly walked abroad, and upon *Shechems ravishing* of her, comes home *big with young*: But *Jacob* turns not her out of doors. It may be thou hast been weakly wandring from thy Fathers house (O beleeving soul!) and corruption in the time of thy wandring hath *ravished* thee: thou art *big with young*, and art afraid to go home. Thou sigheſt, *I have sinned*; and if I return, will Christ accept of me? Fear it not, go and try. He will not cast you out of doors: Though you come with *big bellies*, (to keep to our Metaphor) hee will deal gently with thee (*though with young.*) *Though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord*, Jer. 3. 1. What though a man would not bee so

sweet

ſweet to his wife, yet Chriſt will be to you. *Onely acknowledge thine iniquity*, (and what a poor recompence is that) and fear not to return, *for Chriſt is married unto thee*, Jer. 3. 13. 19. Happily thy ſins have eclipſed love: but know, love remains ſtill, and in due time it ſhall ſhine again. The thick cloud will blow over, and the light of love will ariſe (in time) on thy heart. Chriſt is ſweet that he calls you, *though weary and heavy laden*. He bids you to take unto you words, and turn to him, and ſay, *Take away all iniquity*, and *receive us graciouſly*, Hoſ. 14. 2. How Parent-like doth Chriſt deal! Say (ſaith the Mother) to the offending Childe (after ſhe hath in love whipped it) *Pray mother forgive me, &c.* Chriſt it may bee hath whipped thee in love (O beleever) for thy offence. Now hee puts words into thy mouth, and tells thee what to ſay. His love ſurely is not gone. Is not his carriage ſweet? For,

3 *Chriſt in due time ſmiles upon beleevers after ſins.* As their ſinnings did not *cut off* his love *totally*, ſo neither can they *keep* off the manifeſtations there-

of.

of. Finally, is not Chriſts carriage ſweet to you (Oh ye ſinning ſouls!) that ſmiles notwithſtanding your ſins: *Speak comfortably to Jeruſalem: Comfort yee, comfort ye my people, ſaith* (Chriſt, who is) *your God*, Eſa. 43. How ſweetly doth the mother take up the childe, after ſhe hath corrected it, and dandle it, & kiſs it, &c? ſo ſweetly deals Chriſt with his members after their ſinnings. *Is his mercy cleangone* (ſaith the fallen Saint) *for ever? Will hee be favourable no more? Hath he forgotten to be gracious?* Why remember, O ſoul! ſurely Chriſt hath heard thee thus *bemoaning* thy ſelf; *Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, &c.* Yea it may be ſo, wilt thou ſay, Chriſt hath heard me thus; but what of that? why hee hath ſaid of thee, *Is not he or ſhe my dear child, ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him, therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will* [*ſurely*] *have*, (*i.e.* ſhew) *mercy towards him*, Chriſt cannot hold his love alway in: It muſt, it will burſt out at laſt. *Go and tell Peter.* Chriſt cannot hold. *I will reſtore comforts to him*, Eſa. 57. 17. Chriſt muſt be ſweet. Do you, dare you, can you

deny it, *O ye ſinners of the flock*! Is not this ſweet carriage to ſinning beleevers? Well,

4 Chriſt is very ſweetly and tenderly affected towards ſinning beleevers, for *he is ſad for them, even all the while that he afflicts them.* The mothers heart is ſad, even while ſhe whips her child: & ſometimes ſhe turns away, and weeps to ſee the childe weep, whom yet ſhee made to weep. It is ſo with Chriſt; he chaſtiſeth for ſin, and when he ſeeth the ſoul weeping under that chaſtiſement; he weeps too. My ſoul (ſaith he) *was troubled for him*, Jer. 31.20. מֵעַי לוֹ הָמוּ רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ *i. e.* Thus, thus my bowels ſounded for him. The word ſignifies to ſound as the troubled waters, or tumultuous people; look as the waters after ſome ſtorm ſound loudly; or as a tumultuous people under ſome great oppreſſion (for that is moſtly the ground of tumults) are much troubled: Even ſo was Chriſt troubled at *Ephraims* bemoaning of himſelf; you have *not an High-Prieſt who cannot Sympathize* (as the word is) *Heb.* 4.15 No, but he is ſo ſweet, that he ſympathizeth with you in all ſadneſſes of yours,

yours, under thoſe ſufferings which he brings upon you for your ſins. God had afflicted *Iſrael* for their ſin, but when they *cryed out* under that affliction, *deliver us this* [*once*] (it ſeems a deliverance then would be ſo acceptable, as that it would countervail a deſtruction afterward) it is ſaid, *his ſoul was grieved* (as it were cut ſhort with ſorrow (ſo the word there ſignifies) *for the miſery of Iſrael*, Judg. 10. 15. Oh how ſweet is Chriſts carriage to his ſinning members! who ſympathizeth with them in thoſe ſorrows under which they lie for ſins. Chriſt ſighs and weeps with you, O ye ſighing & weeping ſouls. Is not this ſweet carriage?

וַתִּקְצַר
The ſame word is uſed, *Judg* 16. 16. and rendred *vexed.*

5 *Chriſt carries himſelf ſweetly unto ſinning beleevers, in ſpeaking to the Father to pardon their ſins.* When the mother hath whipped the childe her ſelf, Husband ſaith ſhe, pray forgive it: and thus Chriſt, he ſees his children (for he is the Father of beleevers, therefore he is called the *everlaſting Father*, & they are called *his children*. Compare *Iſa.* 9. 6. & *Heb.* 2. 13.) I ſay Chriſt ſees them fall into the dirt of ſin, he takes them up, whips them indeed, but ſaith, *Fa-*

ther forgive them, for my ſake. *If any man ſinne, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins*, 1 Joh. 2. 1 Chriſt is both our παράκλητος that is, *our Patron*, who takes our cauſe upon him (as *Beza* gloſſeth it well) and our ἱλασμὸς, That is, *our propitiatory* offering, to reconcile the Father to us after our ſins. What can he be more to ſhew himſelf ſweet? Indeed, beleevers, he therefore *lives*, and is at the *right hand of the Father*, that for your daily ſins, he may make daily ſupplications, and intercede with the Father, in your behalf, for your failings. And if this be not ſweet, tell me what is?

6 Singular ſweetneſs ſhines in the carriage of Chriſt towards ſinning beleevers, *in that he takes notice of all that good which is in them, notwithſtanding their ſins.* It is a mighty failing among the ſons of *Adam*, that they ſo minde mens vices, as they forget their vertues. A little evil maks men ſometime forget a great *deal* of *good*; But its not ſo with *Chriſt*, for he remembers, though but a *little good*, notwithſtanning a great deal of evil. Unskilful men throw away

gold

gold, becauſe of the oar mixed with it, ſo do not artificers. The Lord Jeſus (O beleevers!) knows how to diſcern *your gold*, though coveted with much oar, he can ſee the leaſt of your ſparklings (*yee Divine Diamonds*) while ye are in the dirt. Its obſervable how Chriſt in all his Epiſtles to thoſe 7 *lapſed Churches*, takes notice of all the good that was in *them*, and records it. *Epheſus* had forſaken her firſt love. Yet *this ſhe had*, & note, it 'twas but a ſo a this, ſome one thing: & what was that? ſhe hated *the works of the Nicholaitans*, which Chriſt alſo hated.

Obſerve: it was but (as I may ſay) a negative goodneſs. *Thou hateſt the works of the* Nicholaitans, *which I alſo hate*, *Apoc.* 2. 6. Here is but *a little good*, hating bad deeds, and this Chriſt forgets not, but obſerves, although *mingled* with a *great* evil, *viz.* the leaving of *firſt love*. Chriſt O ye ſinning ſouls, forgets not your graces though weak, when he corrects your *corruptions* though ſtrong. 'Twas not a little unbelief *which appeared* in the Diſciples, when they were afraid of periſhing in the Sea, by reaſon of a tempeſt, *Matth.* 8. 24, 25. 'Twas I ſay, not a little, but a great deal of *unbelief*,

belief, which diſcovered it ſelf in that deed; what reaſon had they to fear who carried *Ceſar*? as the Hiſtorian ſaid; why ſhould they cry out we periſh, when they had ſaving preſence with *them*? yet note it, Chriſt doth not ſo eie their fear as to forget their faith; No, he minds and mentions their *faith* though but *little*: And he ſpeaks of their *faith* while he chides their *fear*, *Why were yee fearful, O ye of little faith*? When you ſin againſt men, they'l be ſordid, and forgetting all your good, they'l blazon your blame: but when you ſin againſt Chriſt, he is ſweet, & albeit he may ſecretly tell you of your fault (in your own conſcience) to humble you, yet he'l ſtill remember the grace that is in *you*. Sinning *Sardis* hath but a few *good names* (amongſt many bad) and Chriſt records them. Thou *haſt a few names even in* Sardis, *Apoc.* 3.4. And *falling Philadelphia* hath but a *little ſtrength*, and yet Chriſt eyes it, and blazons it, *thou haſt a little ſtrength* (there it is eyed) *and haſt kept my word* (by that little ſtrength) *& haſt not denied my name*, thus it is blazoned. You ſay ſometimes poor ſouls I wee have much evils, but little good, and ſtrong cor-

corruption, but weak grace: And is not this ſad? It is true, but Chriſt is and will be ſweet, he will not ſo mind your evil, as to forget your good. He will not forget thy weak grace, though mixed with ſtrong corruption. Though you are weak (O ſoul) by ſin, yet Chriſt will and doth remember your little ſtrength; here is ſweetneſs indeed.

Laſtly, The brightneſs of this truth, that Chriſt is ſweet unto ſinning beleevers, ſhines in this beam, *viz.* in *that he turns all their ſins to their good.* Chriſt makes *Sampſons riddle* a truth in beleevers ſouls. *Out of the eater there comes forth meat, & out of the ſtrong, ſweetneſs.* Judg. 14. 14. Chriſt makes the devouring corruptions in beleevers to become meat for their faith to *feed* upon, while by *killing* one hee gives ground to believe the ruine of another, & he brings forth ſweetneſs out of their ſtrong ſins, in making *grace to ſuperabound, where ſin did but abound.* Beleevers, is not this truth? cannot you interpret the riddle of *Sampſon* in the carriage of your Saviour towards you after ſin? Hath not Chriſt helped you to ſuck *hony* (*Bee-like*) from *Worm-wood?* Have not you O *beleeving*

Bee been taught by Chriſt to ſuck the *hony of ſin-hatred*, from the *wormwood of ſin acted*! How ſweetly doth Chriſt *kindle* the Spouſes love, even by her *coldneſs*? doth he not cauſe her ſleeping while he knocked, to end in a *healthful* fit of *love-ſickneſs*, when ſhe *awaked*? Can. 5.2.8. did not Chriſt make *Peters* cowardize in denying him to a *Maid*, turn into *courage* of owning him before a *Magiſtrate*? compare *Luk.* 22.56. with *Acts* 4.8. How did *Peter* by the *lameneſs* wch he took in his fall of denying Chriſt, ever after (as the *Athenians* mother told him) *learn well* to own Chriſt, and that as the ſpeaker for all the reſt, *Act.* 2.14. & 3.12. Surely Chriſt is ſweet in his carriage towards yee, O yee ſinning ſouls! have not you loved the fold more by your wandrings? have not you (*Ammon*-like) learnt to *hate your ſins more than ever you loved them*? As children, have not you been taught to hate the fire that burnt you? Speak, O yee *Ewes* that by the rapes of ſin have been *big with young*. Hath not your Shepherd taught you to loath thoſe ſins which raviſhed you? And to keep cloſer to him, ſince your ſtraying from him?

Thus

Thus you ſee how Chriſt carries himſelf towards his ſinning Members; and tell me now if in all this carriage there be not ſingular ſweetneſs?

Chap. V.

Some reaſons of the Point.

IF now any ask whence it comes to paſs that Jeſus Chriſt is thus ſweet unto beleevers, even notwithſtanding their ſinnings; The anſwer is eaſie, and the reaſons are,

1 *Becauſe of the ſweetneſs of his nature, as God.* Its the nature of God (for his name denotes his nature) to be merciful and gracious, *i. e.* to ſinners (for mercy and grace allude to ſin, there being no place for either, where ſin is not) God is ſaid to *keep mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion, and ſin*, Exo. 34. 7. all the ſorts of ſin are included under theſe three termes, *iniquity, tranſgreſſion, ſin*, and God is ſaid to *keep mercy to forgive theſe*, as if his mercy were kept on purpoſe for pardon and ſweet dealing with ſinners. Your Chriſt is God, O beleevers. This pardoning *fulneſs of the God-head dwells in him, for in him dwelleth* [*All*] *the fulneſs of the*

נוצר חסד לאלפים נשא עון פשע וחטאה

the God-head bodily, Col. 2. 9. Chriſt (as God) is merciful to all ſinners, but (as your Shepherd) he is ſweetly merciful towards you. But

2 Chriſt is therefore thus ſweet unto ſinning beleevers, *becauſe of all his members theſe are the weakeſt.* Sick men are weaker than healthy children. Many times the mother lets the childe cry in the cradle, while ſhe looks unto the ſick-one in the bed. Chriſt is wiſe, and therefore moſt tender of the weakeſt. Chriſt knows your weakneſs, O ſouls under ſinne! And he will therefore be ſweet to you, becauſe you are weak. Poyſon cauſeth pain, and pain proportionates pitty. You have a *pittiful High Prieſt* (Beleevers) who *meaſures out* his *pitty*, according to your *pain*. And becauſe your falling into ſinne, is to you moſt *painfull*, he will be moſt *pittiful*. Naughty conceptions (ſay ſome) are moſt painfull and dangerous: ſure I am, ſinful conceptions are. Beleevers are never worſe than when *big* with ſinne, and Chriſt is ſtill kindeſt to thoſe that are weakeſt.

Μετριοπα-θεῖν δυνά-μενος. Heb. 5. 2.

3 *Sathan is moſt buſie with beleevers when*

when under ſin; and therefore Chriſt hath the more care of them then. Sathan would fain tempt the ſoul to deſpair upon its ſinning, and ſhould not Chriſt be very ſweet, ſo it would. *Chriſt came to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8. Chriſt by his ſweet carriage will deſtroy this work of the Devil, *viz.* deſperation, which he ſpecially indeavours in beleevers after ſinnings. How bitter is Satan to the ſoul after ſinne? How ſadly doth he buffet it? In what black and bloody colours doth hee ſet ſinne before the ſoul? How home doth he lay it? And how high doth he aggravate it? In all this he drives to deſpair. Now Chriſt is at hand to deſtroy this work of Sathan, which he will do, by manifeſting to the ſoul his ſweetneſs, for that alone keeps the ſoul from ſinking. Beleevers would ſink under ſinne, but Chriſt prevents it by ſweetneſs.

4 *Chriſt knows this to be a ſad ſtate for the ſoul to lye under ſinne, and therefore hee is ſweet* to beleevers under theirs. He was tempted unto ſinne (though without ſinne) and ſo knows the

the ſadneſs of that (as a City that hath been beſieged, though not taken, knows the miſery of a ſiege) and hee experimentally knows the bitterneſs of being under ſin (*being made ſin for us, and forſaken of God for that*) ſo that Jeſus Chriſt knowing the ſadneſs of being under ſin, doth therefore eſpecially ſhew ſweetneſs to his members in this condition.

Haud ignara mali miſeris ſuccurrere diſco. Dido apud Virg.

Chap. VI.

Some uſes and applications of this.

I Would fain that the Propoſition thus *proved*, ſhould be *improved*. It is a clear truth you ſee, *That Chriſts carriage is ſweet and tender toward his ſinning members*. Now there is ſpecial uſe which may be made of this, I will only touch at four, *viz.*

An uſe
1. Of *Reproof*.
2. Of *Comfort*.
3. Of *Incouragement*.
4. Of *Counſel*.

Firſt, this point is *profitable for reproof*, and it ſerves to reprove *thoſe, whoſe dealings with ſinning believers are not like Chriſts*. How ſharp and ſevere are

are the dealings of ſome with beleevers for their ſins? If a beleever bee *over-taken* with ſin, What unchriſtian carriage doe they meet withall from ſome? How unbrotherly are the exclamations? And how bitter are the aggravations thereof? Thou ſeeſt thy brother ſin: It is doubtleſs his weakneſs. But doſt thou deal roughly with him? Is thy carriage ſowre? Doſt thou make the moſt of every failing? Doſt thou ſpread it abroad to his ſhame? Bee reproved: for now *walkeſt thou contrary to Chriſt.* I profeſs I fear ſome will inherite *Chams* curſe, for they take his courſe of *uncovering the nakedneſs of Fathers and Brethren.* Ah Lord! was it ever heard, that any who profeſs the Name of Chriſt, ſhould make it their ſtudy, to defame and publiſh the failings and faults of the godly, to ſhame them, and profeſſion in them, yea and Chriſt too at once?

Obj. *I but that which wee report is true? Shall they doe evil, and not hear of it?*

Reſp. Be it ſo, that 'tis true, yet your dealings are not Chriſt-like with them.

them. *Tell him between thee and him alone*, that's Chriſts command, *Mat.* 18. 15. And be *ſweet to him, in dealing with him*; that's Chriſts carriage; know you not what the Apoſtle ſaith? *Brethren, if any one be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore him in the ſpirit of meekneſs, &c.* Gal. 6. 1. *Is railing, reviling, publiſhing*, and *proclaiming errours, and failings of brethren*, reſtoring in the ſpirit of meekneſs? Hath thy brother *broke his bones* in falling, and wilt thou *break his heart* by ſevere and harſh dealing? Hath he an errour, and wilt thou forget all the truth that he holds, to exclaim of that? Muſt thou forget all his graces, becauſe of ſome corruption? What, becauſe thy brother fails, wilt thou bee foul? Becauſe once he did evil, ſhall he never hear well? Be reproved, O ye whom it may concern: you deal not as Chriſt doth with ſinning ſouls, your reproofs of brethren ſhould bee *excellent oyls, which ſhould not break their heads*, as it is, *Pſal.* 141. 5. ſo ſhould you declare kindneſs to them: And ſo would Chriſts carriage appear in yours, your dealing even with offending, and ſinning

καταρτίζετε, *i. e.* Tenderly put his bone in joynt.

ning beleevers, ſhould be in the *meekneſs of the ſpirit*, and in *the ſweetneſs of Jeſus*; and if not, you ſin in your dealings, for you are unlike to Chriſt, and to be reproved for it.

This point is precious, and *it may be as a cordial to faln ſouls.* Chriſts carriage hath been, and is to be ſweet to ſuch as you. You cry out, *I have ſinned, I have ſinned, and what ſhall I do?* I have fail'd in this duty, and fallen by that ſin. I have been *overtaken* with ſuch an infirmity, *overpowred* by ſuch a temptation, *conquered* by ſuch a corruption: And wo is me, *I am undone! I have gone aſtray from the Shepherd of my ſoul: I have played the harlot with many Lovers, and I am big with young: Luſt hath conceived, and it hath brought forth ſin.*

Q. *Now what ſhall I do? will not ſinne bring forth death? I have deſerted Chriſt, will not he deſert mee? Say man of God, whither ſhall I go? what ſhall I do?*

Anſ. *Stay thy ſelf* (O poor ſoul) *upon this point as upon a pillar*: Chriſts carriage will be ſweet even to ſinning ſouls. You have a gracious Lord: *A mer-*

merciful High-Prieſt: A ſweet Shepherd, *who can have compaſſion on them that are out of the way*, Heb. 5. 2. Hee'l gather thee, O weak wandring ſoul! Hee'l reſtore thee to himſelf, *and comfort to thee. His rod and ſtaff ſhall comfort thee*; with his *Shepherds-crook* hee'l *fetch thee in* from wandrings, and with his *ſtaff hee'l ſupport* thee under weakneſs. Bear up, O ye fallen Saints, Chriſt will be ſweet unto you; for hee'l heal your backſlidings, and love you freely, *Hoſ.* 14. 4.

Four ſorts of ſouls in ſpecial I aim at in this uſe of comfort.

1 Such as are *fearful to ſin.* You that *ſtand in awe* and would not ſinne; you whoſe ſouls were afraid before ſinne, and are now much more afraid after ſinne. Take you this comfort, 'Tis yours; Thou ſayeſt, before I ſinned I was afraid, Its ſight was ſad to me, my heart trembled for fear leſt I ſhould bee overtaken with it. Now that I have ſinned, I am more afraid leſt I be kept in ſlavery by it. *Bee not afraid, onely beleeve*: Chriſt will deal ſweetly with you: Hee'l *ſubdue thine iniquities, and caſt all thy ſinnes into the depth*

depth of the Seas, Micah 7. 19.

2 Such as are *sorrowful under sin*. You beleevers, who go in black; I speak to you, Christ is sweet to sinning souls. Why mourn you so much as if you *would not*, could not be *comforted*? That spirit which is now in thee, as a *mourning Dove*, will ere long bring an *Olive-branch* of peace from thy beloved. Hee that now *convinceth of sin*, will speedily *comfort* thee notwithstanding sin. You *weeping Peters*; Christ is sweet, though you have sinned in denying him; hee'l smile shortly upon you. Hear, O yee *groaning Pauls!* you cry, *wretched men* that you are; Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which you are *chief*: And you shall finde sweetness in his carriage, though there hath been sinfulness in yours.

3 You who *mourn under the filth of sin, as much as under the guilt of it*. This comfort is yours: you grieve to see your souls so defiled; and you say, What though I am free from damnation, I am pestred with defilement? I have a filthy hand, and a more filthy heart. My conversation is dirty, but

my disposition is more dirty. Ah Lord will a pure Christ own such an impure wretch as I?

Q. *Will the Lamb without spot own thee, who are nothing (as it were) but a great scab and botch?*

A. Yes, O soul! know thy Saviour is sweet. Hee that loved *Lazarus*, when he lay at the gate of *Dives* full of sores, will love thee, though thou hast been in thy *blood*; and hee'l wash away the filth of thy *botches* with the purity of his *blood*. Hee hath loved thee, and given himself for thee; and hee will *sanctifie thee, and cleanse thee, by the washing of water, and by the word, that hee may present thee glorious to himself, not having spot or wrinckle, or any* [*such thing*] Eph. 5. 27. Rouze up thy self, oh beleeving soul, who groanest at the filth of sin! Christ will be sweet in his carriage towards thee. But,

4 It's your comfort also, *who do mourn and sighs*: who are afraid, now sin hath you down, it will keep you under its *dominion*. Jesus Christ will bee sweet unto you: And *sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. 6. 14

Thou

Thou sayest, Ah Lord! I am afraid since my fall into sin, that I shall get such a haunt, as I shall never leave. I question since I have been *big with sin* once, that I shall be so ever; And which is as bad, if not worse, I fear lest that, since I have done evil, I shall never *learn how to do well*. Say not thus, O believing soul! Jesus Christ is sweet in his carriage towards his sinning members. How'l not cut off *his little toes*, because they have been out of the way; but rather make them streight, and keep them in the way.

Saints under sin remember this point for your comfort: Christs carriage is sweet to his sinful members.

Q. *May not we mourn for falls into sin? Is it not lawful to be sorrowful, since we have been, yea and are sinful?*

A. Yes, you may mourn, but not to desperation; you may be *sad*, but not *over-sad*. There may be a failing even in mourning for sin.

Q. *Why, when doth the soul fail that way?*

A. Then when it hinders us from seeing and tasting Christ as sweet. *So much*

Dr. *Sibbs*, *much ſorrow for ſin* (ſaid an experienced Preacher) *is ſufficient as brings us to Chriſt*. And I may ſay that which obſtructs this is too much. Its one of Satans ſtratagems, to make us pore ſo long upon ſin, as to make us neglect looking to Chriſt: Sin is too bitter, when it makes you forget that Chriſt is ſweet. That weeping is too much, which makes the eyes blinde, and diſ-inables the ſoul from ſeeing Chriſts ſmiles.

Obj. *Oh! but alas, I may well give way to ſorrow, for my ſin is of the greateſt ſize.*

Rep. Why, what is thy ſin, O ſoul!

A. Its a forſaking of firſt love, wandring from my beloveds boſome.

Rep. But know, though thou haſt forſaken thy *firſt love*, Chriſt *keeps his*. He changeth not in his affection, as men do. *Having loved his own, hee loveth them to the end*, as 'tis, *John* 13. 1.

Obj. *But alas! I ſhame to ſpeak out my ſin, for 'tis worſe.*

Rep. Why what is it bleeding heart? Its well thou art aſhamed of it; but yet ſpeak, what is it?

Anſ. Why, its *adultery, ſpiritual adultery.*

dultery. I am guiltie of going a *whoring* from Chriſt: Alas! *ſin hath conceived*, and *I am big with young, &c.*

Rep. Notwithſtanding know, O ſoul! that Jeſus Chriſt *leads gently thoſe that are thus with young*: His carriage hath been kinde to others in your caſe, and it ſhall bee ſo unto you: *Thou haſt played the harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to mee, ſaith the Lord*, Jer. 3.1. You *wandring Ewes*, hearken to this ſweet call of your *Shepherds pipe*, and go return unto him.

Obj. But alas, if I could *return with weeping, and ſupplications*, it were ſomewhat.

Anſ. Why, what were it. O ſoul? It were but ſweet, not ſatisfactory. And Chriſt knows how to bee *kinde*, though you know not how to *cry*. Hee'l love you, and that love ſhall *melt* you. Beſides, what mean thoſe ſighs of thine? thoſe groans of thine? thoſe dolorous queſtionings of thine? Surely they are the breathings of his Spirit in thee, and ſurely Chriſt will bee, nay is ſweet unto thee.

Thus you ſee how uſeful for comfort this point may bee unto beleevers

overtaken with sin. Therefore

3 Let it be for *incouragement unto you* (O beleevers, who are weak by sinning) *let in incouragement you to go unto Christ*, in consideration of the sweetness of his carriage to such as you. Jesus Christ calls you, and saith, *Return unto the Lord your God, for you are fallen by your iniquities*, Hos. 14.1. Go and say, *Behold me come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*, Jer. 3.22. What though you have sinned, yet hee's a Saviour: As all your sins before conversion, did not keep Christ from coming to you; so neither let your sins since, keep you from going to him. *He is still the same in sweetness, bee you the same in faith.* Why tarry you, *O wanderers!* why enter you not the fold of Jesus? call out some one that was once in your case, and enquire whether Christ did deal kindly with him. Doubt not, *O yee of little faith!* but he will be so to you. He useth to be sweet to all the weak of his flock, and in particular to such as you who are weakned by sins. Consider this your Saviours sweetness, and bee encouraged to go to him, O yee sinning souls.

Lastly,

Laſtly, *Let this doctrine perſwade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem*: my meaning is, that thoſe who as yet are altogether ſtrangers unto Chriſt, ſhould come in unto him, you who as yet never knew what it was to be *infolded in the boſome of Jeſus*, who as yet were never *Lambs* nor *Ewes* in Chriſts fold, Conſider the ſweetneſs of this Shepherd, and come in to him. Satan deals ſeemingly ſweet, that hee may draw you into ſin, but in the end hee will bee really bitter to you. Chriſt indeed is ſeemingly bitter, to keep you from ſin, hedging up your way with thorns; But hee'l be really ſweet, if you come into his flock, even notwithſtanding your ſins. Thou lookeſt into Chriſts fold, and thou ſeeſt it hedged, and fenced all about to keep you in from ſin, and this keeps thee from entring: but oh! let it not. Chriſt indeed is unwilling that any of his ſhould wander, and if they be unwilling too, its well. And if they wander, hee'l fetch them in, it may bee with his *Shepherds dog* (ſome affliction) but yet hee'l not bee (as we ſay) *dogged* himſelf: No, hee is, and will be ſweet. It may be

now Satan ſmiles, and is pleaſant to you while you ſin, but know, hee'l be bitter in the end: He that ſings *Syren-like* now, will devour *Lion-like* at laſt. Hee'l torment you, and vex you, and be burning and bitterneſs to you. Oh come in therefore to Jeſus Chriſt, let him be now the Shepherd of thy ſoul: And know then, hee'l be ſweet in endeavouring to keep thee from ſin before thou commit it; and hee'l bee ſweet in delivering thee from ſin after thou haſt commited it. Oh that this thought that Jeſus Chriſt is ſweet in his carriage unto all his members, unto all of his flock, eſpecially the ſinning ones, might perſwade the hearts of ſome ſinners to come in unto his fold.

SECT

SECT. IV.

Chriſts ſweet carriage, ſweet unto Beleevers, weak by ſufferings.

Iſa. 40. 11.

He ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.

CHAP. I.

THe ſharpneſs of the Air in the field makes us keep within; and the harſh uſage which children finde abroad, cauſeth them to minde home. The *ſordid dealings of men* with Saints, occaſions them to think of the *ſweet dealings of Chriſt*; and then wee are moſt deſirous to ſee Chriſt *ſmiling*, when we behold men as *frowning*.

Its a hard time abroad: And ſome that call themſelves *brethren*, are yet *bitter* in their behaviour. Open enemies *ſtrike*, and ſeeming friends *chide*:

Its

Its but meet therefore to look up to Christ, to see how hee stands affected to us, and will deal with us in such a time.

Holy souls! who indeavour to keep your selves from sin: you meet with sufferings, and that upon this ground, because you fear to sin, *You are not of the world*, and you are therefore hated by the world. Christ hath freed you from the *evil* of the worlds *pollution*, and therefore it follows you with the evil of its *persecution*. You finde heavy hands, and you fear hard hearts in the world. I know where your thoughts be. You think, how doth Christs heart stand towards us now?

For this, know Christs heart towards you is very sweet. His thoughts to you-ward are very precious. His dealings with you will be very kind. In the midst of your saddest sufferings, expect sweetest carriage from your Saviour. Its his nature to shew pity, especially when he sees any in misery.

I am now to speak unto the third sort of such beleevers, as I call accidentally weak, *viz*, to those who are *weak through sufferings*: And I am to shew how

how Christs carriage towards them also is sweet as it is to others.

The Prophet tells us. *He shall gently lead those that are with young.* The words may (as I have opened) be applied unto suffering Saints. Its a metaphor in which the Scripture doth much delight it self to set out sufferings by. The *voice* of the Daughter of *Zion* bewailing her self (under tribulations) is as of *a woman in travail bringing forth*, Jer. 4. 31. And Christ speaking of the sorrows, and persecutions which his Disciples should meet withall, speaks of them in this phrase, they should be *as a woman in travail*, Joh. 16. 21. I am loath to make a Scripture bleed (as *Austins* phrase was) by straining it too hard: And I hope if I apply this Scripture unto suffering souls 'twill be milk, not blood. I am apt to think it a safe way, where Scriptures admit of many (but not contrary) significations, to take all, lest I miss the meaning. Bleeding heart for Christs sake! here is milk to comfort you, in this Scripture, it represents Christs carriage very sweet to such as you. *He will gently lead you.* Your way is rocky, full of briars and thorns: persecution is a prickly

prickly path: Your feet bleed, yea, and it may be your hearts too. Well, be of good comfort, Chriſt will *lead you gently*. The truth which I would a little inſiſt upon from *this interpretation* is this, *viz.*

Jeſus Chriſt carrieth himſelf exceeding ſweetly to his ſuffering members.

Chap. II.

Some things premiſed, and the point generally proved.

I Will in ſome ſteps aſcend to the truth in hand. Two things I ſhall premiſe as preparatory to the proof, by way of prevention of objections.

1 This firſt I premiſe, *viz. Chriſt permits his choiceſt members many times to meet with ſharp ſufferings for his ſake, and the Goſpels.* Sometimes hee gives the *dearly beloved of his ſoul into the hands of her enemies*, Jer. 12. 7. 'Twas a ſpeech ſpake by Chriſt himſelf unto his diſciples, *That in the world they ſhould have tribulations*, Joh. 16. 33. The Paſtor propheeied to all his flock, when hee ſaid, *Ye ſhall be hated of all Nations for my names ſake*, Mat. 24. 9. *John* was the *boſome beloved* of *Jeſus*, yet hee muſt to *Patmos*,

Patmos, and there be a *companion* (with suffering Saints) *in tribulation*, *Apocal.* 1. 9. Your Shepherd (O yee heavenly flock) may permit you to walk in the valley of the shadow of death. Christs *Lambs* are sometimes worried by the *dogs*. I shall not need to expatiate. Surely Saints, its no mystery unto you. Sufferings every where meet with you. This *Paul* knew, that the Holy Ghost witnessed *every where, that bonds and afflictions did wait for him*, Act. 20. 23. What a bloody bed-role is that? 2 *Cor.* 11. 23, 24. And *Stripes*, *Prisons*, *Rods*, *Deeps*, *Perils* of all sorts, and from all sorts, these and the like *Paul* met almost every where; This is the first word I premise.

2 The second is this; *That this is consistent with Christs sweetness.* Beleevers, you may be precious in Christs eyes, though in persecutions. *Jesus* is a *beloved*, though you are in *blood*: Though he permit you to *suffer*, yet he is *sweet*. Himself was the *dear-one* of the Father, yet he suffered, and his Father was still *dear*. Christs sufferings were consistent with his Fathers sweetness; and yours are with his. *To you it is given, not only*

only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, as it is, *Phil.* 1. 29. Affliction is a gift of *love*, even as faith is, its grace as well to *bleed* for, as to *believe* in Christ. It may be fair over head, when and while foul under foot. In a bad way a man may have good weather. A fair skie, and a filthy way may consist. The Shepherd may *pipe*, though the dogg *bark*. Build upon it ye suffering Saints! Christ may be sweet, though you suffer. Though your cup be bloody, he drank first, and surely for the servant to drink of no worse than his Master, its not hard. Admit men are unkinde, yet Christ abideth kinde, yea, although hee suffer men to deal hatefully with you; hee is merciful still. Their *malice* doth not make void his *mercy*. Its a fallacious way of arguing, because you suffer, therefore Christ is not sweet. No, your sufferings, and Christs sweetness, may stand together.

If you ask how can this be? I answer, well enough. And this I shall prove.

The phrase in the Text includes two things, tending to confirm this truth, viz.

viz. 1 Presence.
2 Supportation.

1 *Presence.* Christ is with his Members in all their miseries (he could not else *lead them,*) Saints in their saddest sufferings, in their forest persecutions, have Christs presence, *when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee,* said *Isa.* 43. 2. When the three children were in the furnace, Christ was there to make the fourth. *I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God, Dan.* 3. 25. Christ you see was so sweet as to be in the fire with those Saints. And it seems he *led them* there, for 'tis said, they *walked.* John *was in the Isle called* Patmos, *for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, Apo.* 1. 9. And Christ was there too, v. 13. *David* knew well this sweetness of Christ his Shepherd: and therefore he assures and comforts himself with this; That though he were in *the vale of the shadow of death,* yet Christ would be with him, *Psa.* 23. But

2 Christ is not only present, but *supportingly present* with his in their sufferings. *Christ leads his gently,* while they suffer grievously. This *David* also knew,

and

and therefore he ſaith, *thou art with me: thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.* Saints are weak in ſufferings; ſo weak that they cannot ſwim (at leaſt) long. But Chriſt will keep them from ſinking. Feeble feet can hardly go upon rocky ground, if ſome body do not ſupport, they will fall. That the feet of the Saints may not ſlide, and they fall under, or in ſufferings, Chriſt will be preſent (for he *keepeth the feet of the Saints*) and lead them. *Paul* tells *Timothy*, though men were ſo weak as to *deſert* him, when he was to anſwer before *Nero*, yet Chriſt was ſo kind as to be preſent with him, and to *ſupport* him. He ſpeaks of it with a *notwithſtanding*, as if *he* ſhould ſay, though all ſhamefully *ſhrunk* back, & forſook me, yet *notwithſtanding* Chriſt *the Lord* (ſweetly) *ſtood by me, and ſupported me*, 2 Tim. 4. 17. Speak Saints! in your ſufferings to have Chriſts *company*, and *ſupport*, is it not ſweet? When you paſs thorow *fire* and *water* (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſa.* 66. 12.) to have Chriſt to go along with you, & to *lead you gently*, is it not glorious? why, this others have had; and you ſhall have, to let you ſee this as true, that *Chriſt can't*

ties

ries himselfe sweetly to suffering Saints.

CHAP. III.

One great instance to prove the point.

I Desire to let you see the truth of the point fully: Therefore I shall lay before you one great instance, in which you may see it plainly.

I will instance in Christs carriage towards his Disciples (who were to suffer upon his departure.) And you shall see how sweet it was.

There are five particulars in which Christ did sweetly declare himself towards his Disciples, with reference unto those sufferings that hee knew they would meet withall, for his sake, in the World, as soon as hee departed.

1 *Hee gave them not only reall, but royall testimonies of his love;* In that hee washed their feet, and serves them; In that he instituted his Supper, and feasts them; And in that forgetting his own sufferings, hee comforted them. *When Jesus knew that his houre was come* (saith the Scripture) Christ knew that this was the *hour and power of darkness* (as hee

elſewhere calls it.) Hee knew that hee was now to ſuffer, and that upon this, his Diſciples would bee ſcattered, yet even now, *Having loved his own, he loves them to the end.* He doth not withdraw from them to ſpend this hour in preparing himſelf: but he ſpends it in loving them. Have you ever heard of one who being ready to ſuffer death himſelf, and who had but one night ere he ſhould bee taken, and yet did ſpend that one night, and all that night in *waſhing*, *feaſting*, *comforting* ſome others. Why beleevers: Jeſus Chriſt was ſuch an one, when the hour was come, and he knew it, that he muſt be taken and dragged to ſuffering, he forgets as it were himſelf, and ſpends all the time in *feaſting* and *chearing* his Diſciples, as if he were rather ſenſible of theirs than of his own ſufferings. All this is clear out of *Joh.* 13. and 14 But

2 *He fore-warnes them of all, even the worſt of thoſe evills that they ſhould ſuffer.* There was not a *pricke*, a *Stone* in the way in which they ſhould goe, but hee acquaints them with it. Hee tells them how that the world would *hate* them, *perſecute* them, *excommunicate* them, yea,

yea, kill them. How ſweet is hee? to tell them the ſaddeſt things before-hand; that when they meet with them they might not bee *offended*, that is (as the word *John* 1. 16. will bear) ſo *ſcandalized* as to fall. Chriſt tells them all the *rubs* in the way, that when they meet with them, they might not fall over them.

3 *Chriſt* (having fore-warned them of the ſufferings they ſhould meet with-all) *hee gives them comfort to ſweeten thoſe ſufferings.*

As 1 He aſſures them, that (though hee left them) they *ſhould not be as Orphans*, without a Tutor, or Guardian. 2 That therefore, *hee would ſend them the Holy Ghoſt*, who ſhould both comfort and take care of them, *Joh.* 14. 16, 18. To this he adds, that they were near to him, even as near as the *branches to the Vine*; and that therefore they ſhould ſuffer no worſe *than himſelf did*, Joh. 15. 1, 20. Leſt they ſhould be born down with the thoughts of the lenghth of their ſuffering, hee tells them that it ſhould be *but* ſhort, and though the ſenſe might bee ſharp, yet the *iſſue* ſhould be *ſweet*. To this end hee tells them that

their *sorrow should bee turned into joy*: And that they should be but *as a woman in travaile*, whose sorrow is measured by an hour (as is hinted in that expression, *when her hour is come*) but whose *joy* should be such, as that it should *swallow up* that sorrow, and *make her forget it*, Joh. 16. 16. To this he joynes, that as their *sorrow* should have an *end*, so their *joy* should have *none*, for it should be such as *none could take from them*, verse. 22. Thus he cheares their hearts against that fear of sorrow which had *filled* them.

4. After all this, *He bends his knees to his father, and prays for them*, Joh. 17. And how far-passing sweet was hee in his prayer! Observe, he intreats the Father to *keep them* from the sting of sufferings, *i. e.* the *evil of the world*, verse. 15. And that the *Father* would grant them *that*, which is the *mystery of glory*, i. e. union to himself, *that they may bee one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; I in them, & thou in me*, verse. 21. 23. And (as if all this were not enough) he *wills* it: That they might have as *glorious a Mansion* as himself, and that they might have the *same glory* that he had with the *father* before the World was, *vers.* 24. Thus

he

hee poures out his heart in prayer for them; And which is conſiderable, this hee did in their audience (as the context ſhews) O how were the Diſciples hearts raviſhed think you all the while!

5. Laſtly, that hee might yet ſhew them more ſweetneſs, *He actually ſubmitteth himſelf to ſufferings, and he offereth himſelf to free them. If ye ſeek me let theſe go their way*, Joh. 16. 8. So he ſuffers, that they might not; he takes the blows on himſelf, to keep them off from them. And this ſtill he doth ſpiritually; for all our ſufferings are rather the *remainder of Chriſts afflictions*, as 'tis, *Col.* 1. 29. than our own.

So that now put all this together, and parabolically (yet plainly) it ſpeakes thus; There was a great Captain to fight a bloudy battel (in which by being conquered, he would get the day) he knew that himſelf ſhould bee taken in the firſt onſet, and that afterwards hee ſhould bee ſlain; yet for all this, ſome few hours before the enemy fell on, hee feaſts his Souldiers, and ſerves them himſelf in that feaſt. Tells them of all the worſt the enemy would, or

could do; ſpends his Oratory in making a long and ſweet ſpeech to encourage and comfort them: Tells them plainly that hee ſhould bee taken and ſlain; yet aſſures them of another Comforter, and Chieftain. In the midſt of them lifts up his eyes to Heaven: And (as if he minded them more than himſelf) prayes more for them, than for himſelf. Having done this, hee prepares to meet the enemy. And as ſoon as they appear, hee approaches; and by giving himſelf up as their priſoner, makes way for his Souldiers eſcape. Tell mee, was not this a ſweet Captain? was not this ſweet carriage? Why beleevers, the Parable is concerning the *Captain of your ſalvation*, Jeſus Chriſt. The pre-mentioned particulars open and make good the Parable in all its parts, and doth not this Parable prove the point? *viz. That Chriſt is very ſweet to his ſorrowful, ſuffering members.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Eight particulars inſtancing and declaring the truth of the Point.

AS a further demonſtration of the truth of the Doctrine, I will adde ſome particulars, in which the ſweetneſs of Chriſts carriage towards his ſuffering members doth eſpecially appear. And

1 It apeares in this, *That hee ſecures their chiefeſt jewel in their ſoreſt ſuffering.* Saints have a *pearl of great price*, which if they have ſecure, they fear no loſſe. This pearle is their *ſoul*; and this Chriſt ſecures in all their ſufferings. Upon this ground it is that hee bids them not to fear. *Bee not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do*, Luke. 12. 4. This hee ſpake in the beginning of his Sermon and that was intended to his *Diſciples*, as appears ver. 1. *Tanle capſam Anaxarchi*, ſaid the Martyr. Beleevers, all the *threſhing* of your enemies, can but beat away your *huskes*. The worſt that ſufferings can, or ſhall do, is but on the worſt part, your *vile body*: Chriſt

ſtill ſecures your beſt part, your ſoul. I know your cry in ſuffering: Is it not that? *Deliver my ſoul from the ſword, my* [*Darling*] *from the power of the dog*, Pſal. 22.20. Why beleevers, Chriſt will do this. Hee alway keeps that in *his own hand, and none can, or ſhall pull it thence.* Ye ſhall bee hated of all men for my names ſake; *But there ſhall not a haire of your head periſh*, Luke 21.17.18. Some expound this thus, you ſhall ſuffer much, but not in the main; not a haire of your head (which may bee an Hebraiſme for that which is the chief) ſhall periſh. Sure I am of this: That which is a Saints chief, is ſecured in the midſt of ſufferings. Beleevers, your enemies ſhall but bruiſe your *heel*, your worſer part. Chriſt will ſecure your *head*, *i. e.* your precious, prime, chief part. Your *wood*, and *hay*, and *ſtubble*, your poor, baſe, droſſie part may ſuffer loſs, but your precious things ſhall not. Your *Soul*, your *God*, your *joy in God*, theſe things Chriſt will have and hath a care of; and what ever your ſufferings are, theſe bee ſafe. Indeed if in afflictions and perſecutions, your *ſoul*, your *ſalvation*, were in danger,

ger, 'twere *ſad*, but 'tis not, becauſe Chriſt is *ſweet*. Your ſufferings ſhall be ſo far from indangering thoſe things, that they ſhall rather *turn to your ſalvation*, as tis *Phil.* 1. 19. But.

2. Chriſt carryes himſelf paſſing ſweet unto his ſuffering members; in that *he gives them cordials ſuitable to all their ſufferings*. Its worth the noting, that as thoſe *cordialls* which Chriſt gave to his Diſciples were ſweet, ſo they were ſuitable to what they ſhould ſuffer. *Joh.* 16. 2. The nature of their ſharpeſt ſufferings is held out by *excommunication*, and *killing*, *They ſhall put you out of their Synagogues and kill you*. The term ἀποσυνάγωγος *fieri* (which is here uſed) anſwers unto that degree of *excommunication* which the *Hebrewes* call חרם which was a ſolemne kinde of *excommunicatton* (above that which they called נדוי) publiſhed in the ſight of the whole congregation; in which they did totally caſt out of the congregation, reading and denouncing the dreadfull and horrible curſe of the Law. This was one thing that they ſhould ſuffer. Now as *ſuitable*

unto

unto this, Chriſt had told them, *That he went to prepare manſions for them in his Fathers houſe*, Joh. 14. 2. In which hee comforts them thus; Though you ſhall be caſt out of the Jews *Synagogues*, yet you ſhall not be caſt out of my *Fathers houſe*; I have prepared *manſions* for you there, be not therefore troubled at that. And for that ſuffering unto *death* (which was hinted in this, That men ſhould *think they ſerved God in killing them*, eſteeming belike your ſlaughter his ſervice) Chriſt gives them a *cordial ſuitable* to this, *John* 14. 19. where hee aſſures them, that their lives ſhould bee as ſure *as his*: For becauſe he lived, they ſhould *live alſo*. And however they might be *killed*, yet hee would raiſe *them up again*, as it is *Joh.* 6. 44. Thus Chriſt gives cordialls ſuitable to all their ſufferings. Bear up your hearts, ye bleeding beleevers! there are *ſuitable cordials* for you in your Saviors boſome, and hee will give them forth. If men *frowne*, he hath *ſmiles*: Do men *diſgrace*, hee hath *honour*? Do you loſe *periſhing riches*, he hath *unſearchable*? Do men deal with you as *foes*? Hee hath called

led you *friends*; what ever you ſuffer loſſe in, hee will make it up. If you loſe *life*, you ſhall *finde it*. Do your *ſufferings abound*, his *conſolation ſhall abound alſo*: If you *ſuffer for him*, you ſhall *reigne with him*. What can hee? what would you more? Say, is not this ſweet carriage, thus to provide, and give forth ſuitable ſweetneſs to all your ſufferings?

3. In all the ſufferings of Chriſts members, Chriſt carries himſelf ſweetly to them, in that *he ſympathiſeth with them* in all. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, Iſa. 53.9. Beleevers, ſuffer where, or when you will, Chriſt *ſuffers* there and then with you. Had perſecutors eyes, they would ſee this; but though they are blinde, yet do you beleeve. *Paul* thinks hee onely perſecutes *men, and women* at *Damaſcus*: But in them hee perſecutes *Jeſus*. And though hee knew it not at firſt, yet hee did afterwards. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou mee?* Act. 9.4. If we periſh, Chriſt periſheth with us (ſaid *Luther*.) Suffering Saints, Chriſt is ſo ſweet to you, as that hee ſuffers with you. Are you in *dungeons*? Chriſt is there too. Is

John

John in *Patmos*, baniſhed for the *teſtimony of Jeſus*? Chriſt is there too. Do you *bleed*? Chriſt bleeds with you: Are you *reproached*? Chriſt is reproached in you. When enemies *ſmite* you, they *ſmite* Jeſus, and *he feels it*. While you *mourn*, he *weeps*. While you *ſigh*, he is *ſad*. He ſits on your dung-hils by you. And if you wear *ſackcloth*, hee'l not wear *ſilkes*. Every drop of bloud that you bleed, goes to his heart. All thoſe afflictions which *Paul* reckons up in 2 *Cor.* 11. 25, 26. &c. hee puts them upon Chriſts ſcore, *Coloſſ.* 1. 24. The *Baptiſm* of affliction wherewith you are *baptiſed*, is Chriſts. Count not, call not that yours, which is his. Surely he rather ſuffers in you, than you for him: or if you will ſay you ſuffer for him, yet know, he *ſympathiſeth with you* in that ſuffering. Surely this ſympathie is ſweet. Have you ever a friend, that while you *faſt*, refuſeth to *eat*? that while you are in the *field*, neglects his *bed*; that while you *watch*, will not *ſleep*; that weeps with you, ſighes for you: Tell me, what is this friends name? what call you this carriage; Chriſt is this friend, this is his carriage;

riage; sweet is his name, and sweetness is with him. Is it not apparent in this carriage?

4 The carriage of Christ is sweet unto his suffering members, in that *he orders all their sufferings, for quality, quantity*, and *duration*. Persecuted Saints! Christ is the *supervisor* of all your sufferings; whether thy sufferings are, or shall be *cruel mockings, bonds, stoning, sawing asunder*, &c. what kinde soever, Christ is to order it, not thy foes. And he will see what suffering will best suit thee, and thy strength. *Some* (saith the Martyrologie, *Heb.* 11.) *were stoned, others sawn asunder, some slain with the sword, others wandred, &c.* Christ orders all your sufferings. Hee tels *Peter* by *what death he should glorifie him*, Joh. 20. 19. And so for *quantity* Christ orders all; *Thou tellest my wandrings*, &c. *Psal.* 56. 8. He means his wandrings while persecuted (such as the Apostle means, *Heb.* 11. 37.) not a step more, than Christ would, did *David* wander. Beleevers, you shall not *weep a tear*, nor *bleed a drop*, nor *bear a strife* more than Christ will *number* out. As hee appoint your sufferings for the

סַפַּרְתָּה i. e. Thou numbrest as with a pen.

the *quality*; ſo for *quantity too*. No other, nor no more affliction than hee will, no, nor no longer neither: for hee orders the duration alſo, *Ye ſhall have tribulation ten dayes*, Apoc. 2. 10. The *Gentiles* ſhall tread the holy City *under foot forty and two months*, Apoc. 11. 2. The *Witneſſes* ſhall lye in the ſtreet *three dayes and a half*, *ibid.* verſe 9. So many *dayes*, ſo many *months*, Chriſt orders all. Oh how ſweet is this! ſhould Chriſt leave the ordering of our ſufferings to our enemies, how ſad were it? might they do *what*, *how much*, and *how long* they would, 'twere grievous. But they ſhall do *no other*, *no more*, *no longer* than Chriſt will. Beleevers, Chriſt will *order all your ſufferings*. Becauſe hee is ſweet, hee'l not leave it to your ſelves, for you are *ſimple*, you know not *what*, or *how much*, or *how long* you are fit to bear. But Chriſt doth, and he'l chuſe and order for you. You would be exceeding diſorderly, were your ſelves to order your ſufferings: and your enemies would be more extream: you would think no affliction too *little*, no meaſure too *ſcanty*, no time too *ſhort*: And your enemies would account no affliction too

too *great*, no meaſure too *much*, no time too *long*. But Chriſt will order them, & you too, and this becauſe hee is ſweet. Hee'l carry the buſineſs ſo as that your affliction both for *quality*, *quantity*, and *duration* ſhall neither be *contrary to your State*, *above your ſtrength*, *nor beyond your patience*. And bee yee now Judges your ſelves, is not this carriage ſweet?

5 Jeſus Chriſt lets out much ſweetneſs unto his ſuffering members, in *giving them moſt glorious viſions, in their moſt grievous ſufferings*. Chriſtians, what ſee you in your ſufferings? are there not beamings-forth of glory on you? What a viſion had *John* in his baniſhment? *I ſaw* (ſaith he) *ſeven golden candleſticks: and in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks* (*one like unto the Son of man*) *cloathed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle: his head & his haires were white like wool, as white as ſnow, & his eies were as a flame of fire, &c.* But where did *John* ſee this, and when? Why, in *Patmos*, when he was there a *companion* (with ſufferers) *in tribulations Apoc.* 1. 9, 12, 13. Its reported of one *Theodorus*, that while he was on the rack, *ſuffering*, hee

he was noted to continue *ſmiling*, and being asked how, or why, he ſmiled ſo, he anſwered, He ſaw a young-man all in white wiping from him his ſweat, &c. *Moſes* endured, *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*, Heb. 11. 27. The *inviſible God* appears very *viſible* to Saints in ſufferings, and this helps them to endure. When was it that *Stephen ſaw the glory of God, & Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God*? was it not when his Enemies *gnaſhed their teeth on him*? Act. 7. 54, 55. *There bee Divine comforts which are felt under the Croſs, and not at other times* (ſaid Dr. *Sibs*) The *ſpirit of glory is to reſt on us*, while reproached, as 'tis, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. How have the Martyrs ſpoke of ſuch ſpiritual viſions, and incoms, which they have had in priſon, the like unto which they never found, nor felt at other times. The *child* hath never ſo many fine things when *well*, as when *ill*: We give our *Rings, Jewels, chains, neat works*, &c. to our children, if they be in pain, which *we lock up* in Cloſets, and Cabbinets at other times. Chriſt gives *Cabbinet-comforts, lockt up, and unuſual diſcoveries* to his members in *Priſon*, and *Dungeons*. And this Chriſt doth, that

that he may declare his sweetness to his in sufferings.

6 Christ discovers singular sweetness to his suffering Members, in that *he makes them (even while they suffer) glorious in their enemies eies. Bazil* tells us (in his oration of the 40 Martyrs) that one of those that did watch them saw a strange sight (εἶδεν θέαμα ξένον) &c. viz. certain powers as it were descending from heaven, and bringing Kingly gifts unto them; his meaning is, that the man saw the *Angels descending upon them with Crowns* to Crown them. Christ is able to open *Balaam's* eyes, and let him see the (otherwise invisible) *glory of Israel.* The Scripture tells, that *Stephen* was made very glorious, even while he stood in the council of his foes; and this also in their eyes; for tis said, *all that sat in the Council, looking stedfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel.* Acts 6. 15. Christ often lets out a *convincing glory* in his members, even while they suffer. Tell me suffering souls, is not Christ sweet to you, in rendring you glorious in your enemies eye? But

δυνάμεις τίνας ἐξ οὐρανῶν καπίουσας αἱ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις πᾶσι διήρουν δῶρα.

7 Christ is sweet in *avenging his*

Martyrs on their enemies for all their suf-ferings. 'Twas *Gideons* kindness to his *Brethren*, when he avenged them upon *Zeba*, and *Zalmunna*: Its said, he slew them, and took away their ornaments: and this out of respect to his brethren, whom *Zeba*, and *Zalmunna* had slain: for he protested; *As the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you*, Judg. 8. 19. Its a signe of a favour, and Christ is sweet, when he suffers not our enemies to *triumph over us*: as 'tis *Psal.* 41. 11. But its more sweetness for Christ in avenging us to triumph over them. It is the Fathers *sweetness* unto Christ (and therefore promised) that he would *cloath all his enemies with shame*, *Psalm.* 132. *ult.* And its Christ *sweetness*, that he will do that for his suffering Saints which his Father did for him. *Therefore rejoyce, for God hath avenged you*, *Apoc.* 18. 20. That Scripture, *Isa.* 63. presents Christ not suffering (as hath been mistaken and misapplied) but *triumphing*, in *avenging his redeemed ones*. And observe, 'tis woven up thus: *I will mention the kindness of the Lord*; v. 7. Its loving kindness to you (*ye Sufferers*) that makes him execute vengeance on your enemies. Lastly,

Lastly, The *sure remembrance, and the great reward for all the sufferings of Christs suffering Members*, is a declaration of his sweetness to them, Christ will not forget, neither *your labour*, nor sufferings of *love*. *To you that have continued with me in my temptations*, i. e. afflictions & persecutions (for so temptations are here interpreted, if you compare *Luke* 8. 13. with *Matt.* 13. 21.) *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*, Luke 22. 29, 30. your light affliction worketh for you, *a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 19. A sweet Lord gives a weighty reward, for a light suffering. *Paul* was good at reckoning, & yet he saith, *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worth to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed unto us*, Rom. 8. 18. *Romans* may forget *Martins* both in service and sufferings, in *march* and *wounds*: But Christ always *remembers* his servants sufferings, and rewards them, not for any worth that is in them, but for the sweetness which is in him. And beloved, when you shall be taken up into glory, and see those *weighty Crowns*, which shall then be given to

sufferers for Christs sake, you will say, and sing: *Oh how sweet is Jesus to those that out of love to him, under-went sufferings for him!*

Chap. V.

Some reasons of the point.

I Hope by this that hath been hinted, 'tis clear enough that it is so; *viz. That Christ is very sweet to his suffering Saints.* I will now shew some grounds *why 'tis so.* The reasons are

Either { 1 *More General*; or,
2 *More Particular.*

General, if we consider, either the Law of equity, the nature of *relation*, or the power of *love*, wee shall see that which is the ground of this point.

1. *It's but equal that Christ should carry himself thus to them, who suffer for him.* Christians would be as free from sufferings, as others, were it not for their Saviour. Did not they *love* him, none would hate them. They are *hated for his sake*, Luke 21. 17. Men *reproach* them because they *honour* him. When as you are *reviled, persecuted, & have all manner of evil spoken against you falsly*; Christ knows

knows its for his ſake, as 1 *Mat.* 5. 15. Now *Equity* requires, that Chriſt ſhould deal ſweetly with them, who ſuffer thus ſharply for him. Could, or would Saints deſert their ſervice of Chriſt; if they would but joyn with others to *crucifie* him; they ſhould not need to fear any ſufferings themſelves, were it not that they obſerve his Laws, make conſcience of his *Ordinances*, ſtand to his *truth*, maintain his *Goſpel*, and alas, were it not for thoſe things, they might be as ſecure as others. They are good people, but they are *Puritans*, they are to bee miſ-liked for nothing, but that they are *preciſe*. They might be free from the curſe, would they renounce Chriſt. Hence it is that Jeſus Chriſt carries himſelf thus tender to them, becauſe they are *true* to him: He cannot but ſweeten their ſufferings, by his carriage to them, ſince they ſuffer for conſcience to him. How did the perſecutors of old, indeavour to perſwade Chriſtians, to deny Chriſt! what *Serpentine ſubtlety* with *Sugerd-poiſon-rhetorick* was uſed to make them deny him! what *high honours, vaſt wealth, alluring pleaſures* were laid before them?

And how did their adversaries say, *All these will we give you, if you will not worship Jesus.* But alas! how little did this prevail; how *gallantly* and *graciously* did they deny these, and *own* Christ! how Christianly-courageous, did they *scorn all proffers*, and *hold fast their profession.* How roundly, did the forty *Martyrs* reply unto the flatterings of the Governour, τι, φᾶσι, δελεάζεις ἡμᾶς ὦ θεόμαχε ἀποστενῶν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος, &c. *i. e. What, or why,* (said they) *doest thou go about (O thou fighter against God) to entice us to forsake the living God, &c?* But why do I dilate? you your selves know, would you but crucifie your Lord, your enemies would *crown* you: would you *dishonour* Jesus by sinning, men would *honour* you. But you cannot, will not, dare not *deny* Christ in any thing; & therefore it is that you suffer in every thing. Surely beloved, Christ is not *unrighteous, to forget your work, and labour of love:* Sith you cannot bee *unfaithful*, he will not be *unkind*; and sith you suffer for him, he will (indeed cannot, but) bee sweet to you.

2 Where there is *relation between parties, there will be kindness shewed in suffe-*

rings.

ings. Christ and the Saints are related nearly, as neer as *friends*, for so he calls them, *Joh.* 15. 15. yea as neer as brethren, *Heb.* 2. 11. Bleeding believers, Christ is your *brother*, *And a brother is born for adversity*, Prov. 17. 17. Should not Christ be sweet and kinde to you in your adversity, he should forget (but sure he will not) why he was born. If you say there is *a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*, Prov. 18. 24. I tell you, Christ is your friend and hee'l prove himself so in your sufferings. *Job* friends were friendly in their visit, and compassion, though faulty in their charge, Christ will as *friendly visit* you, and sympathize with you as they did: and be more sweet in his carriage than they were. Hee'l not *blame*, but *bless* you. Hee'l not add affliction to affliction by his censures; as they did, but hee'l be sweet in his carriage: for he knowes, *thou to him that is afflicted, pity is to be shewed by his friend*, as 'tis *Job* 6. 14. Suffering Saints, remember you are related to Christ, and that *relation* may be a *reason*, why you may conclude that hee'l carry himself sweetly

sweetly to you in all your sufferings. But

3 *Love constrains:* Christ loves his own, and his love to them *will constrain him to be tender over them in their sufferings.* The mothers love will open her *bosome* to give the childe her breast at any time, especially when it *cries.* Yee *Martyrs in life* (for there is a slaying all the day long, *Rom.* 8. 36.) remember your Masters *love:* its very strong, therefore hee'l be very sweet. Christ is *bound* with cords, in all your *bonds.* The *cords of love* are on him, they'l *pull him* to you, while you are pulled by persecutors; if you are in prison, his *love* will make a *key* to open the door to visit you. If you be in banishment, his *love* will invent *wings* to *fly* after you, what ever be your sufferings, his love will sweeten them. *Jonathan* was passing sweet to *David*, especially while *David* was in his sufferings: And *David* expressed *pathetick love* to *Jonathan* alwais, but he was most *passionate*, when he heard of his *slaughter.* The reason was, their *love was wonderful, passing the love of women.* Christ (O ye suffering souls!) loves you with a love passing

the

the love of *Jonathan* and *David*, & the power of this love will appear (and indeed moſt) when you are in ſufferings, and appointed *unto ſlaughters*. You ſee the reaſons in the *general*; I will adde but ſome more *particular* ones briefly, to let you ſee Chriſt is, *and will be ſweet in his carriage unto ſuffering beleevers*.

Conſider him in his offices, of *King*, *Prieſt*, and *Prophet*, and you will ſee it in all grounds of the point.

1. As *King*, Chriſt is your *King*, and he will be *kinde*. Hee'l neither tyrannize himſelf, nor ſuffer others, If he do, hee'l bee ſweet and tender: while they bee ſowre and tyrannize. The *Pſalmiſt* expoſtulates cheerfully with reference to the Churches affliction, thus, *Why haſt thou caſt us off for ever? How long ſhall the adverſary reproach? why withdraweſt thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy boſome*. For God is my [*King*] of old, *Pſal.* 74. 11, 12. Obſerve, the Church was bold to expect Chriſt to be *kinde*, becauſe he was *King*. Heathen Princes have been very kinde to their Subjects, eſpecially ſuch as ſuffered in their Wars. Surely you may be confident Chriſt your King will bee

kinde

kinde to you (O yee *Martyrs*) for you suffer in his wars. Write it in golden letters, *King Jesus is sweet to all his Subjects, especially his suffering ones.* Indeed Christ were not your *King*, if he were not *kinde*.

2. Christ as *Prophet* cannot but be sweet to Saints in sufferings. It was his command to the *Prophets*, which hee set as under him, that they should Prophesie sweetly to his people in their sufferings, *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, &c.* Isay 35. The spirit of the Lord, (which anointed Christ as a Prophet) was upon him to this end as well as others: *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oyl of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heavinesse, &c.* Isay 61. 3. *Munsterus*, and *Oecolampadius* understand this of those that mourn for *Zion*: The Original will beare it, and the Context seems to favour it; without doubt Christ the *Prophet* (as well as the *King*) of *Zion*, was *anointed* to preach glad tydings to the *Martyrs*, as well as to the rest. Your Saviour (O ye sufferers!)

לאבלי ציון
i.e. That bewail Zion.

gets!) will and must bee ſweet unto you under your perſecutions, as he is your Prophet. But

3. As a *Prieſt*, Chriſt cannot but ſympathize with, and be ſweet unto his people in their ſufferings. The *Prieſt* (in the Parable, *Luke* 10.) forgat his *Office* of Prieſt-hood, *when he paſſed by on the other ſide*, verſ. 31. and neither *looked upon*, nor ſhewed kindneſs to the wounded man; but though hee did ſo, Chriſt will not forget himſelf; but hee'l be *ſacerdotal*, and ſweet to you (O ye wounded ſouls for his ſake) Some think, and that groundedly, that the *watchmen* (mentioned *Cant.* 5.7.) were the *Prieſts* & *Presbyters* of the Church: If ſo, you will ſay, ſurely they were ſtrangely metamorphized: for its ſaid, they did beat & wound the *Spouſe*, v. 7. Its a ſad truth, that ſome that pretend to be in a peculiar manner *Prieſts*, do ſometimes forget themſelves, & turn *perſecutors*. But yet comfort your ſelves with this (beleevers) though they perſecute, Chriſt will be kinde: he is, and will bee very ſweet unto you in your ſufferings. And this as your *Prieſt*.

You ſee now the grounds of the poinr

point both *generally* and *particularly*: there is our *special* ground in the Text. I will only adde that, and come to some improvement of the point. The *special ground* is this, Christ is a *Shepherd*. How tender, how careful is the *Shepherd* to, and of all his *flock*, but especially of such as the *dogge hath bit*, *or the wolfe torne*? What *washing* of the wound, what *binding* up of the limb, &c. How hastily doth he run to it, and how tenderly doth he drive it, and all because 'tis *hurt*. Christ is your *Shepherd* (suffering beleevers) and he hears how the *dogs bark and snarl* at you; he sees how they go *about the streets, & about the City, and make a noise like a dog* (as 'tis, *Psal.* 59. 6.) Christ observes all the goings of the *wolves*, that walk about you, and he takes notice of the *Lions among whom you lye*; and doubtlesse hee'l see if they *bite* you, and if they do, hee'l come, and *Shepherd-like*, hee'l be sweet unto you. Oh that you did but see your *Shepherd* in your sufferings! how would that sight support you? Mark how angry Christ is with those *shepherds* that did not *strengthen* the diseased, nor *healed* that which was sick

ſick, nor *bound* up that which was broken, nor *brought again* that which was driven away, &c. Ezek. 34. 4. And mark moreover, how he ſaith, that in regard of their neglect, *He would ſeek the loſt, bring again thoſe which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, & ſtrengthen that which was ſick, &c. ibid.* verſe. 16. O believers! your *chief Shepherd* is, and will be ſweet unto you. Hee'l in all caſes apply himſelf ſuitably kind unto you. Hee'l *poure in oyl & wine into all your wounds*, (which the *dogs* and *wolves* of this world make in your *names, States, perſons, &c*) Hee'l *waſh and ſupple* them all. Hee'l *kiſſe you with the kiſſes of his lips*. Hee'l *imbrace* you in his *armes*. In all things he'l ſhew himſelf to bee a ſweet Shepherd to you in your ſufferings.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

Containing some uses of the point, and the conclusion of the whole.

YOu have now seen the point proved, I desire it may bee improved. Christ you hear *is sweet in his disposition towards, and in his dealing with his suffering members.* Will you make these uses of it?

1. *Let this keep you from being over-afraid of sufferings for Christs sake.* Be not like *Jonah*, so to *fear*, as to *flie* from the work of Christ. You are bid not to *fear the faces of men*; and why should you? For admit they be *cruel*, Christ is *kinde*: If they *afflict* you, hee'l *comfort* you. Sufferings were never *disadvantagious* to Saints, but when *dreaded*. Desert not the waies of Christ for fear of the *cross*; *Fly* not from him out of *fear* of men. *Sanctifie Christ in your hearts, and let him be your fear.* What if *sufferings* come from men? *sweetness* shall come from him. Its a shame to see it, and a sorrow to speak of it: Many people for fear of persecution flye from the work of Christ.

They

They leave the dwellings of *Jacob*, out of dread of *Esau*; and because they fear the crucifyings of *Pilate*, so it is as that they forsake their Saviours. I beseech you fence your heart against these fears, with this truth, *Christ is, and will bee sweet to suffering Saints.* But

1 Let this *keep you from sinking under suffering*: Christ will bee sweet unto you: why should you *sink* under that which Christ *sweetens*, though the *thorny Crown* prick thy *head*, the *love* of Christ shall refresh thy heart. It's for persecutors to shrink upon Christs *sweetness*: The persecuted may rejoyce, for Christ looks on them with smiles. Let them sink in sorrow that do *evil*; It's for you to sing with joy, who *suffer evil*. *Paul* and *Silas* may *sing Psalms* in prison, while the *High Priest & the Rulers frown the people*. Mind this (ye that suffer in any kind) Jesus Christ useth to shew much sweetness to his people in their sufferings: Do not you therefore sink in your spirits.

2 This sweet Truth is a *sharp reproof unto those that deal otherwise with believers under sufferings than Christ doth.*

How

How ready are men to censure Christians that are in troubles, and sufferings for Christ? O this is your *headiness*, your *rashness*, your *inconsiderate* zeal, your being *too forward*, &c. Had you been sober, you should not suffer, you have brought misery upon your selves: As you *brew* so *drink*, none do pitty your case, eate the fruit of your own folly, &c. Thus do some deal sordidly with those, that Christ will himself, & would have us too, deal sweetly with. O how are these to bee *reproved*? What for men to bee *wiser than Christ*; for them to call that *headiness*, which the Spirit counts *holinesse*; for men to *condemn* those as *fooles*, who are so *wise* as to *suffer*, rather than to *sinne*. And to take up a *crosse*, rather than not to *follow Christ*. Is this to bee like unto *Jesus*? Is this to have the spirits of Christians? Nay is not this to be like to the *Jewes*, who mocked at Christ upon the crosse, and gave him *vinegar* and *gall to drink*. Surely you who *censure*, *slight*, *scoff*, or the like, at the godly in *Prisons*, or *Pillaries*, or under any sufferings for Christ; you are sharply

to be blamed, ſeverely to be reproved, for dealing thus *ſordidly* with thoſe, to whom Chriſt is ſo *ſweet*: Its true, they are not the worſe for this, neither need they to care, but you are the worſe, and you need care for being ſo unlike to Chriſt in your carriage.

4 Sith Chriſt is, Oh *let us bee alſo ſweet to ſuffering Saints*. Let the ſame diſpoſition be in us, that is in Chriſt, and let us deal with Chriſtians who are in affliction, as hee doth. To this end,

1 *Let us own them*; why ſhould wee bee aſhamed of them, whom Chriſt *owns*; and who *own* Chriſt ſo much, as that they are not aſhamed to ſuffer for him? It ſtands on record as the glory of a good, and great man, that when the Chriſtians were brought to anſwer for themſelves before the Heathen Emperour, hee (that was *Vettius Epagathus*) ſtood up, and demanded to be heard in the defence of the *Brethren*. Oh that in ſuffering-ſeaſons you would own ſuffering-Saints! Do not look away from thoſe that *ſuffer for the teſtimony of Jeſus*. 'Twas ſordidly done by thoſe that forſook *Paul*, when hee was brought before *Nero*; 2 *Tim.* 4. 16.

Nil magis æquum quam conſulem defendit à conſule, ſaid *Cicero*. Sure *Nil magis æquum quam Chriſtianum defendi à Chriſtiano.*

why ſhould wee deſert thoſe by whom Chriſt ſtands? let the world know that you *allow* of Chriſts waies, by *owning* thoſe that ſuffer in them, and for them: Take notice of thoſe that are in *raggs* for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, and let not thoſe who ſuffer for Chriſt, have occaſion to complain that your carriage is not like his.

2. *Incourage them*, write letters of *love* to thoſe that are in Baniſhment *for* the *Lord*. Hearten them by word and writing, that ſtand it out in a ſtorm for truth. *Bleſs* them as the *Beloved of the Lord*, who are the *hatred of the world*. Parents, incourage your children, not onely in *well-doing*, but in *evil-ſuffering*; ſay, you are glad that ever you begat any, to bleed for Chriſt. Friends, encourage your friends that *do*, and *dye* for the Lord Jeſus: tell them, its their *honour to be counted worthy to ſuffer for his Name*. While men revile them, do you praiſe them; and as others ſeek to make them deſert truth, to avoid ſufferings; ſo do you ſtrengthen them in the truth, notwithſtanding ſuffering. Its *Chriſt-like* to write an *Epiſtle* to a *ſuffering*, and a *not fainting Epheſus*: To write,

write, that you take notice of their *works, their patience and sufferings for the Gospel, &c.* This will be sweet to them. Discouragements unto Martyrs are *sinful*; *Paul* counts and calls dehortation from sufferings a *heart-breaking*, *Act.* 21. 13. But incouragements in sufferings are *divine*, and to hearten those who *bleed* for Christ is very Christian.

3 *Sympathize with them.* Next to suffering our selves, is sympathizing with others. *To rejoyce over the children of* Judah *in the day of their destruction*, is sordid, and argues *the prophane spirit of* Esau, *Obad.* 12. but to *weep with them that weep*, is sweet, and it argues the *Spirit of Jesus*. He was, and we should be persecuted in the persecutions of those that suffer for his sake, *Act.* 9. 4. 'Tis Apostolike exhortation, *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, &c.* Heb. 13. 3. your mournings with them, will sweeten theirs: and your compassion, will be their consolation. *By sympathizing with those that suffer for Christ, we do at once give them present, and secure to our selves future comfort. Rejoyce with joy*

compatior, signifies to suffer with.

Note this.

(*i.e.*)be exceeding joyful)*for* Jeruſalem, *all ye that mourn for her*, Iſa.66.10. Your mourning with Saints is their *comfort in hand*, and your own in *hope*. Either be on the *Croſs* with Chriſt *ſuffering*, or be by the *Croſs* with *Mary* weeping. 'Twas *Nero*'s ſhame, that when *Rome* was on fire, he *ſang*, but 'twas *Jeremiahs* glory, while *Jeruſalem* lay an heap, that hee knew no tune but *lamentations*. Its *Antichriſtian* to inſult over Martyrs, and to cry, *aha, aha*; but its Chriſtian to ſay, *ah* my brother, and *ah* my ſiſter! let that bee your ſweetneſſe to Chriſts *Friends*, which was the ſweetneſs of *David* (even to his enemies) that hee afflicted himſelf with *faſting*, and was *bowed down heavily* whilſt *they were ſick*, *&c.* Pſal.35.13,14. Certainly 'twill be a cordial to them; (and O let it!) I beſeech you, while they are in the *travel* and *pain* of perſecution, do you *afflict your ſoul by ſympathy*; *Faſt*, *bow down*, *pray* for them, 'twill be a ſingular diſcovery of your *love* to your *fellow-members*, and alſo of your *likeneſs* unto your head Chriſt.

4 Add to all the reſt, this, *viz. Releeve them*, let not thoſe *periſh*, who are in

in *priſons* for Jeſus. To *viſit* them, and relieve them, is ſo pleaſing to Chriſt, that he both *regiſtreth*, and *rewardeth* it. *Paul* ſpeaks of the ſweetneſs of *Oneſiphorus*, this way, as being much *refreſhed* by it, and *affected* with it. *The Lord give mercy to the houſe of* Oneſiphorus, *for he oft refreſhed mee, and was not aſhamed of my chain. But when hee was in* Rome, *he ſought me out very diligently: And in how many things he miniſtred to me at* Epheſus, *thou knoweſt very well*, 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17, 18. See how hee ſets out the ſweetneſs of *Oneſiphorus* in his carriage to him, while he ſuffered; you *communicate* with Martyrs in the glory of their afflictions, while you relieve them; and you *do well*, if you do ſo, *Phil.* 4. 14. all your *ſupplies* that you give, or ſend to ſufferers, are precious *preſents* unto Chriſt: *The things* (*Paul* ſpeaks of ſupplies ſent him in priſon) were *an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a Sacrifice acceptable, and well-pleaſing unto God*, Phil. 4. 19. To pour out of *your baggs* upon thoſe that pour out their *blood* for Chriſt, is a *ſweet ſacrifice*: To give a *cup of conſolation* in relief, to thoſe that pledge Chriſt in *the cup of ſuffering*, is a divine *drink-offering*; and as its a

refreſhing to thoſe that ſuffer, ſo its pleaſing to Chriſt. Its *Angelical to comfort Chriſt in his Agony*, Luk. 22.43. In this you may be like to the *Angels*; for what you do to any of Chriſts *Martyr-Members*, hee takes it as to himſelf, and will one day tell you ſo, *Mat.* 25. 45. *For as much as you did it to one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren* (*i.e.* in tribulation) *you did it unto mee.*

I will contract this uſe, and conclude it with this word: while others as *Inſtruments of Antichriſt* perſecute, do you *as imitators of Chriſt* be ſweet to ſuffering beleevers. Let your *owning*, *incouraging*, fellow-feeling, and *relief*, be as *ſweet dropping* unto thoſe who *travel for the teſtimony of Jeſus*. But,

5 Let this Doctrine be improved for conſolation. Comfort your hearts yee ſuffering Saints with this, that Chriſt will carry himſelf ſweetly toward you. Methinks I hear ſome ſuffering-Saints ſigh, and ſay, *is it nothing* (for ſo it may be read) *to all that paſs by? &c.* Lam. 1. 12. and I weep ſore in the night, and among all my lovers *there is none to comfort mee*; all my friends have dealt treacherouſly with mee: They have heard

heard that I ſigh, and there is none to refreſh mee. I *ſtand* for Chriſt, but there is none *ſtands* by mee; I own him, but none owns mee, &c. Well, *bleeding beleever*, bear up, Though men forſake thee treacherouſly, Chriſt will yet *own* thee, and though they'l not *comfort* thee, hee will; what though men, as *Swallow* (and as one ſaid well, ſhallow) *friends* leave thee in the *Winter* of thy affliction, yet Chriſt as a conſtant *friend* abides. Its your *glory* that you *ſuffer* for Chriſt; and its his *grace* hee'l *refreſh* you. Rejoyce (as *Paul* did) in your ſufferings, ſith in them you *fill up that which is behinde of the afflictions of Chriſt*, as 'tis, *Col.* 1. 24. And know this for your comfort, you that ſuffer with him, ſhall alſo *reign* with him. Its the miſery of thoſe that *deny* Jeſus Chriſt, hee'l *deny* them. But for you who do continue with, and follow him in his ſufferings, hee hath appointed you a Kingdome, and ere long hee'l *inthrone* you in it. Suffering *ſouls*! I ask you what *Sips of Sweetneſs* have you from Chriſt? See you not *Heaven clear* over you? Doth not Chriſt *lead you gently*? Its your priviledge that you may, and

I hope you do expect more than ordinary ſweetneſs from Chriſt. The *cup* that you have in your hand, though fleſh taſte it *bitter*, doth not the Spirit make it *ſweet*? what is that in the *bottome* of your *bloody cup*? Is it not *love*? are not your draughts of ſuffering, ſweeter and ſweeter? What *glory* is that which *reſts* upon you? Say, *Is not Chriſt with you in the fire, and doth not hee paſs with you thorow the water?*

Q. *Soul, Why* weepeſt *thou? ſayeſt thou, Chriſt is* abſent, *in this thy ſtorm of* wind, *and* rain, *and* blood, *doth not the* Sun *ſhine?*

A. No, ah no, I ſuffer for *Chriſt*, and yet I am without *Chriſt*, could I but have his preſence, I ſhould ſleight perſecutions: did he *ſmile*, I ſhould *laugh* at my foes *frowns*: were I but in the *light* of him, I could ſing in this *darkneſs*; And did I but injoy the leaſt of his *love*, I could triumph in the *flame* of their *wrath*. But ah, alas, woe, &c.

Rep. Stay, O ſoul! ſpeak not out thy ſorrow too ſpeedily: Chriſt cannot be long away. Heark! *Hee comes leaping over the mountains*. See how the *clouds fly away*: Surely the *Sun* will ſhine

ſhine preſently: hee cannot be long away, your *ſins ſhall not*, think not then, that your *ſuffering can* ſeparate between him and you. *Why ſayeſt thou, O* Jacob, *and ſpeakeſt, O* Iſrael, *my way is hid from the Lord? Haſt thou not heard? haſt thou not known the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, hee fainteth not? he giveth power to the faint.* Sing ye ſufferers, rejoyce ye *priſoners of hope*! the Lord whom you *look for*, and *long after*, he is with you, he cannot be abſent from you. *Chriſt* is in your priſons (though it may be you are *not aware of it.*) However *caſt not away your confidence*, for *hee that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now the juſt ſhall live by faith.* ('Tis ſpoken to ſufferers) *Heb.* 10.38. Live (O live) by *faith*, yee that *die daily* for the *faith*. In the *faith* of this truth refreſh your ſpirits. *Chriſt is, and will be ſweet in his carriage to ſuffering Saints.* Therefore,

6 Be ye *incouraged, O beleevers, to be willing to ſuffer for Chriſt.*

But becauſe (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *'tis good to be zealouſly affected alwaies in good things*: and in as much as experience ſeals to this Scripture-Truth, that

that ſome *have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* Therefore ere I proceed to preſs this uſe, I ſhall premiſe this: that four things are to be wiſely heeded by all ſuch as expect Chriſts ſweetneſſe in their ſufferings. If you therefore look to experience the truth of this doctrine in your own ſouls, minde them. You muſt look in all your ſufferings, that

1 Your *cauſe be good.*
2 Your *call bee clear.*
3 Your *carriage meek.* And
4 Your *end bee right.*

1 *Look that your cauſe be good:* Its not for every cauſe that a Chriſtian ſhould ingage unto ſufferings. Neither will Chriſt let forth ſweetneſſe to every ſufferer. *Let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or as a theef, or as an evil-doer, or as a buſie body in other mens matters,* 1 Pet. 4. 15. To ſuffer in theſe or the like caſes, is not *Chriſtian,* neither will it be *comfortable.* Some men ſuffer rather as malefactors, than as Martyrs. *To ſuffer, either for diſturbing a States tranquillity, or for indeavouring the introduction, or ſettling a peoples ſlavery, is ſo far from having a Divine, that it wants a moral approbation*

probation. And certainly ſuch ſufferers have little reaſon to expect Chriſts ſweetneſſe. As ever therefore you would, that in your ſufferings you ſhould bee able to ſay, Chriſt is ſweet; make ſure of this, that your cauſe bee good.

2 *See alſo that your call be clear.* Chriſt calls not all to *Martyrdome*, no more than hee doth to *Miniſtery*: The one is a gift, as well as the other. To you its *given* to ſuffer, *Phil.* 1. 29. As preaching, ſo likewiſe ſuffering without a call, will have little comfort. I am perſwaded both the reaſon why ſome have been in the Pulpit without ſucceſſe by Chriſt, and others have been in the priſon without ſweetneſſe, hath been this, *viz.* want of a call. Its true, ſometimes one called to preach, may want ſucceſſe, and alſo one called to ſuffer, may not preſently finde comfort (as in godly *Glovers* caſe.) But certainly without a call, either to the one, or the other, a ſoul hath no juſt warrant to expect comfort. As falſe Prophets of old, ran before God ſent them, *Jer.* 29. 9. So ſome falſe Martyrs of late, have ſuffered ere Chriſt called them

them. Bee therefore wiſe to clear your call: If that bee ſure, you need not doubt, but Chriſt will bee ſweet. Indeed when truth ſuffers by our ſilence, wee are called to ſpeak: and when our life will be Chriſts denyal, wee are called to dye. When I am before a Magiſtrate for Chriſts ſake: Hee then calls mee not to bee aſhamed of him; and when ſin and ſuffering ſurround me ſo, as that I am neceſſitated to take the one, if I will leave the other, then without doubt I may conclude, that Chriſt calls mee to ſuffering, and that in it, his carriage towards mee ſhall be ſweet. But

3 *Let your carriage be as your Saviours in your ſufferings*, if you'l have his ſweetneſs, *i. e.* let it be *meek*: Its poſſible to be *ſinful* in ones *carriage*, when one is *righteous* in his *caſe*. And if ſo, its no wonder, if Chriſt be not found *ſweet*. To be fierce and raging, to rail, and revile in ſuffering, hath more of a Beaſt, than a Man: Surely its not beſeeming humanity, and unworthy of Chriſtianity; Chriſtians ſhould bee as Lambs in their ſufferings. *Sheepiſhneſs in this, is Saint-ſhip*: Its true, the Apoſtles rejoyced that they were counted worthy

worthy to ſuffer ſhame for Chriſts name, *Act.* 5.41. But they never reviled the powers under which they ſuffered. It becomes Chriſtians to give bleſſings for curſes; all manner of evil ſpeaking is to be put away, *Epheſ.* 4.31. Satyrical invectives are not becomming Saints (eſpecially) in ſufferings. Chriſt was a Lamb dumb before the ſhearers, ſo (ſaith the Scripture) opened hee not his mouth, *Act.* 8.32. Surely the more wee have the likeneſs of his Spirit, the more may wee expect the taſtes of his ſweetneſſe, in all our ſufferings for his ſake, and the Goſpels.

4 Laſtly, Eye your end in all your ſufferings. If thy end be either ſelf, or Schiſm, how canſt thou expect Chriſt ſhould be ſweet to thee in thy ſufferings? Some have died, that their names might live. Many I fear venture and act unto ſufferings, rather to maintain their own tenets, than Chriſts truths. *Socrates* died to juſtifie that there was but one God; but whether hee died not for his own opinion, rather than for Gods ſake, is no great ſcruple. 'Tis ſure one may (I wiſh none did) ſuffer as much for ſelfiſh, as ſublime reſpects.

reſpects. Some ſuffer as they do, *i. e.* for their own glory. A *Roman* ſpirit can hold to ſuffering and death. An oppoſing ſpirit will put on ſome to dye, rather than to yeeld. The Apoſtle hath left it a clear thing, that 'tis poſſible to give ones body to bee burnt, and yet to want true *divine love* (for ſo I render that place, 1 *Cor.* 13.) I beſeech you to minde Chriſts glory, truths propagation, the maintenance of equity and righteouſneſſe, in all your ſufferings, if you expect Chriſts ſweetneſſe.

Ἀγάπη ſignifies ſtrong love and ſincere. *Charitas*, ſignifies ſpiritual love and ſublime.

Having therefore premiſed theſe things, let mee onely intreat you to minde them. Indeed it is, and muſt be your wiſdome to ſee your *cauſe be good*, you *call clear*, your *carriage meek*, your *end right*: And if, then go on, *fear* not, *flinch* not, let ſufferings come *when*, *where*, *how* they will, Chriſt is, and will bee ſweet unto you in them. But if you *draw back*, *his ſoul will have no pleaſure in you*. Nor can your ſouls expect any from him. Certainly, if you *draw back* from *perſecution*, you *draw on to perdition*. Chriſt is not ſo ſweet in his dealing with *Martyrs*, but hee is as dreadful

dreadful in his diſcoveries to *Apoſtates*. Ask *Spira*, how doleful a condition denying is? hee'l tell you, that he *could feel no comfort enter into his heart, and that there is no place there, but only for torments, and bitter vexings of ſpirit.* Hee'l ſadly relate to you, that hee knew that *juſtification was to bee expected by Chriſt, but hee denied it, to keep his frail life from adverſity, his Wife and Children from poverty: But now behold how bitter is this life to mee, &c. There is no puniſhment ſo great, but I have deſerved it, for this my ſo hainous offence; I aſſure you, it is no ſmall matter to deny Chriſt, and yet 'tis more ordinary, than commonly men do conceive it, &c.* Well, I beſeech you beloved, take heed of *denying Chriſt* for fear of ſufferings. 'Tis ſweet to ſuffer for Chriſt, and if you do, you will finde it ſo. Hee'l (as one ſaid) *pour out love upon the ſoul, when the body pours out blood upon the Truth.* But in caſe the ſoul to keep its *blood*, deny Chriſts *truth*, it may (as *Spira* did) wiſh, *O that I might feel, but the leaſt ſenſe of the love of God to mee, though but for one ſmall moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of Hell within me,*

and

and afflicts my conſcience with pangs unutterable, &c.

To winde up all, I beſeech you do more than think, *i. e.* O meditate of theſe things. And let this whole (though little) tract of Chriſts ſweetneſs, prevail with your hearts to enter, and to continue in the *fold* of Chriſt. Remember, while you are *without Chriſt*, you are *without God in the world*: you wander in a wilderneſs of ſin and ſorrow: you are but (at beſt) amongſt wilde-beaſts, you can expect nothing but dangers and devourings. But when once you are returned to the *great Shepherd of your ſouls*; when once you are brought to, and walk with Chriſt, you are ſafe and ſweet. For if you are *weak*, hee'l *carry* you, and that in his *boſome*: If you *wander*, hee'l *gather* you, and that with his *arm*; while you are *Lambs*, hee'l *carry* you ſafely, and if you are *Ews great with young*, *hee'l lead you gently*. Say not, *ſin* is ſweet, and *ſuffering* bitter; *eaſe* is pleaſant, and *labour* painful: But know, that if Chriſt take you into his *Fold*, you will ſay, *ſin is bitter*, and *perſecutions* for his ſake (though unto blood) are *ſweet*, you

will

will then conclude, the *yoak* of Christ is *easie*, and his work is full of sweetnesse. Beleevers, bear witnesse to this truth: To the rest I say as *Philip* to *Nathaniel*, *Come and see.*

Let me end all with *Calvins* Comment upon my Text. "In these words "is expressed the singular indulgence "of God, by which he is not only led "forth with a common affection to- "wards his whole flock, but by which "he declares, according to the weak- "nesse of any, his solicitousnesse in "taking care, his humanity in nou- "rishing, and his patience in bearing. "In which he omits nothing belong- "ing to the office of a good Shep- "herd. For all the sheep must be taken "care for, especially they are to bee "born with, or relieved, if they bee "weak. *O taste and see, that the Lord is good*, Psal. 34. 8. Sit down under Christs shadow with great delight, and you shall finde his fruit sweet unto your taste. Calvin in locum. Cant. 2. 3.

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Calvin in Locum.

Cant. 2. 3.

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